

# IMPROVING OUR LEADERSHIP

*By*

PAUL EDWARD KEYSER

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THE PARISH AND CHURCH SCHOOL BOARD  
OF  
THE UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

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## INTRODUCTION

The importance of leadership education in the church is universally acknowledged. The rapid developments in general education, the influence exerted by these developments upon Christian education, and the production of new types of courses for church schools and church societies are making greater demands upon church workers. These cannot be fully met without at least a measure of preparation on the part of all who are responsible for carrying on the various activities of the local congregation and its auxiliary organizations. This need of more adequate leadership preparation has been felt not only by the leaders of the church at large but also by the local church workers themselves. There is evident everywhere an earnest desire for a program of leadership education which will help present and prospective congregational leaders to equip themselves for more effective service.

The United Lutheran Church in America, through its Parish and Church School Board, has for many years been aware of this need of its constituency and has planned a series of texts to help meet the requirements of the present educational situation in the church. This series of texts is known as *The Lutheran Leadership Course*.

The Board has recognized the fact that some church workers have had more educational advantages and fuller leadership experiences than others. Accordingly, it has planned courses on two levels—a more elementary series and a somewhat advanced series. The present volume is a text in the more advanced series.

This text is intended to provide the basic material for a course entitled "A Study of the Christian Leader." Its chief objectives are: to make church workers, present and prospective, aware of the need and great importance of personal growth and leadership development; to assist them in coming to an understanding of what is involved in such self-improvement; and to help them take some initial steps toward it. Other courses in the series enter more fully into specific phases of leadership development.

The material in the various chapters has been so arranged as to call forth the student's own thought and to elicit his effort to apply his conclusions to his own life and leadership activities.

For instance, here and there throughout the discussions there are assignments which are deliberately placed so as to provoke thought and to stimulate action. It is important that each assignment be carried out *at that point where it is found*. The "Summary," the "Questions for Discussion and Review," the "Suggestions for Further Study," and the "Bibliography"—all found at the end of each chapter—are likewise intended to stimulate the student's own thinking and to secure his personal participation in further efforts toward the improvement of his own leadership.

While this text has been prepared primarily for leadership education classes, it is suitable for use also in workers' conferences, young people's groups, adult classes, and for personal reading.

The author, the Rev. Paul E. Keyser, is a member of the staff of the Parish and Church School Board. For several years he was in the active pastorate, which he left at the call of the Board to become one of its field secretaries. Within a few years he was made an assistant editor. He has specialized in the field of religious education, has had considerable practical experience with leadership training classes, and has contributed articles to educational and other periodicals. The Rev. Paul J. Hoh, also a member of the staff, collaborated with the author in the preparation of the final copy of the manuscript.



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## **CHAPTER I**

# **THE CHRISTIAN LEADER AS A DISCIPLE OF JESUS CHRIST**

What a joyous, thrilling, and rewarding experience it is to be a Christian leader! What a privilege, and what an opportunity! Ask anyone who has given himself whole-heartedly to the service of Jesus Christ: a pastor who has won people to faith, a deaconess who has ministered to the unfortunate, a superintendent who has built up his church school, a teacher who has helped his pupils to develop Christlike attitudes, a counselor of young people who has led youth into paths of fruitful service. Such persons know the glory of Christian service. They may say that their work has not been easy, that they have encountered difficulties and disappointments, that they have had to put forth diligent and persistent effort; but they will affirm that all this has been as nothing compared with the joy and worthwhileness of their work.

If one were to make a study of consecrated and effective church workers, he would discover, among other things, that they are never completely satisfied with themselves and their work; that they have an insatiable desire to do ever more and ever better work; that they want to grow in grace, in knowledge, in skill, and in service; and that they are always eager to avail themselves of opportunities for self-improvement. Perhaps this eagerness is one of the reasons why they are effective. Certainly it is one of the marks of their Christian consecration.

For all such Christian workers, eager to grow and willing to devote time and thought and effort to their development, this study is intended. Its primary purpose is to offer them guidance as they set out to improve themselves as Christian leaders.

### **The Term "Christian Leader"**

In its broadest possible sense, the term "Christian leader" includes every Christian who commands a following and who exerts upon his followers a Christian influence. In this sense, Christian philosophers, statesmen, scientists, business men, and

numberless others are Christian leaders. In a somewhat more restricted sense, the term may be applied only to those who are doing specific tasks in and through the Christian Church. It is in this latter sense that it is used here. While for practical purposes the term is thus narrowed down to mean the equivalent of "church worker," it must not be forgotten that there is the larger and broader application.

In this text the term "Christian leader" is used to designate church workers—all of them, from the president of the general church body to the humblest servant in the smallest congregation. Primarily, however, attention will be focused upon those persons who hold places of responsibility *in congregations*: pastors, councilmen, superintendents, teachers, officers of organizations, members of committees, parish workers, home visitors, and parents, for these last-mentioned, too, have an important part in the work of the church. For all such persons, whether already actively engaged in church work or preparing themselves to take their place in it, this course is especially prepared.

### The Importance of Leaders

Leaders have always occupied key-positions in the world. They have been the spearhead of human progress. Emerson once said, "All history resolves itself very easily into the biography of a few stout and earnest persons." These "few stout and earnest persons" were leaders. Some of them occupied positions of great prominence; others never got their names before the world. But all of them, whether prominent or obscure, contributed to the development of human life.

What is true of the place of leaders in general history is true also of their place in the history of the Christian Church. The church is what it is today largely because of its leaders. Some of these were outstanding—Paul, Augustine, Luther, Knox, Wesley, and others—and the history of the church shows the tremendous influence of their lives. Others were relatively unknown—they have gone to their graves unhonored and unsung—but they too helped to make the church what it is. Because of the consecration, loyalty, and service of countless thousands of these leaders, great and small, Christianity has marched forward. And the church of the future will be to no little extent

what the leaders of today make it; it will progress and prosper in proportion to the devotion, the faithfulness, and the unstinting labor which its consecrated workers dedicate to it.

Of all who have given themselves to the church and for it, there is One whose name is pre-eminent. He stands, towering infinitely above all others, unique. If, as Emerson said, "an institution is the lengthened shadow of one man," then it may truly be said that the Christian Church is the lengthened shadow of Jesus Christ, its divine Founder, its eternal Leader, its ever-living Head. It is he who has empowered it, guided it, made it what it is. It is he who has been the life, the inspiration, and the strength of all its human leaders. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that without his presence and power all human leadership effort would be utterly futile.

Accordingly, the very first requirement for leadership improvement is a thorough understanding of one's personal relation with Jesus Christ. It is the purpose of this chapter to help the reader come to a fuller appreciation of the nature and value of life with Christ, in order that he may earnestly undertake to improve and develop it.

### Importance of Relationship with Christ

Relationship with Christ is the very heart and center of a Christian's life—*every* Christian's life, whether he be a leader or simply a humble follower in the ranks. Every Christian ought to, indeed must, know what Jesus has done for him and what this means for his own soul. He must be able to say with Luther:

"I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord; who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, secured and delivered me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with silver and gold, but with his holy and precious blood, and with his innocent sufferings and death; in order that I might be his, live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness; even as he is risen from the dead, and lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true."

Out of this deep-seated conviction and out of an undying sense of gratitude for what his Lord has accomplished for him, the Christian must respond to this divine redemption with utter

faith in Christ and with a whole-souled linking of his life with the life of his Lord. He must, indeed, come to the point where, like St. Paul, he can sincerely say: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." This intimate life with Christ is the very foundation upon which all Christian living must rest. Particularly is this true of the Christian leader.

The supreme importance of the leader's relationship with Jesus Christ may be seen from two simple statements—the one a statement of Jesus himself; the other a statement of one who, next to Jesus, was probably the greatest and most effective Christian leader of all time. Jesus once said to his disciples, "Without me ye can do nothing." The apostle Paul declared, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Without Christ—nothing! With Christ—everything!

*Assignment 1: Read thoughtfully and prayerfully John 15: 1-11 and Philippians 4: 8-13. Meditate on what they suggest as to the importance of the leader's personal relation to Christ.*

### The Meaning of "Disciple"

The term which perhaps best expresses the true relation of the Christian to Christ is *discipleship*. Our Lord himself frequently used the word "disciple" to designate a follower of his, and it has been in constant use in the church ever since his day. What does it mean?

In general, "disciple" means learner. It is applied to anyone who receives instruction and guidance from another. In this sense we may speak of the followers of any teacher or leader as his disciples. It was in this sense that the gospel writers spoke of "Moses' disciples" (*Jn. 9: 28*), "disciples of John" (*Mt. 9: 14*), "the disciples of the Pharisees" (*Lk. 5: 33*), and, of course, the "disciples of Jesus."

This term, when applied to followers of Jesus, however, has a much deeper and richer significance. Perhaps we can get at this fuller meaning by studying exactly what discipleship meant in Jesus' day. Then, in the light of this study, we shall be able to see more clearly what it means for us today.

## Discipleship in Jesus' Day

On the basis of the New Testament records of the life and teachings of Jesus, we may say that discipleship in Jesus' day meant five very definite things:

1. *Discipleship meant receiving and responding to a call to follow Jesus.* Our Lord began his public ministry with a deep consciousness of a God-given mission. This mission he stated in many different ways.

*Assignment 2:* Read Jesus' own statements of his mission as given in *Luke 19: 10; Luke 4: 43; Mark 10: 45; and John 10: 10.* Think what he meant by these.

In all these statements about his mission, Jesus was speaking of essentially a single purpose—namely, saving those who were lost from God's fellowship, restoring them to it, and giving them a more abundant life in it. To this Jesus dedicated his life. He sought to realize this purpose partly by calling upon men to repent, partly by preaching and teaching, partly by deeds of loving service, partly by his own example, and partly by his death, resurrection, and ascension. In other words, Jesus' whole self and life became the means of fulfilling his mission—a mission which dominated and controlled his every thought, attitude, word, and deed.

To reach the multitudes who needed his ministry and to bring his redeeming work to bear upon their lives, Jesus called into his fellowship a group of men who were to assist him during his lifetime and carry on his work after his departure from this world. These men were his disciples.<sup>(1)</sup> Some, Jesus called individually; others, he called in groups. Some, he seems to have selected deliberately; others came to him when they heard of his teachings. Regardless of how the call came, those who responded were his disciples; all others were not. A disciple in Jesus' day, therefore, was a person who received and responded to a call to follow him.

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<sup>(1)</sup> The term "disciple" should be distinguished from the term "apostle." The disciples were all those who came to believe in him and who followed him with love and devotion. The apostles were the twelve disciples whom Jesus chose from this larger group and whom he entrusted with special responsibility. All the apostles were disciples, but only twelve of the disciples were apostles.

2. *Discipleship meant receiving and responding to Jesus' teaching and training.* One reason why Jesus called men was that they might learn of him. When they responded to his call, he began at once to teach and train them. He knew that if they were to live a more abundant life, they must be taught just what that life is, and then be trained to live it successfully. Jesus, therefore, sought to reach all men with his teachings. But to those disciples whom he chose to be his special helpers—the twelve who became apostles, and the seventy whom he sent on a special mission—he gave special instruction and training, that they might be adequately prepared for their task.

How did Jesus instruct and train his disciples? Sometimes he gathered them about him and by more or less formal teaching methods instructed them in matters of vital importance for life and growth in God's kingdom. At other times he talked quite informally with them. Then, too, he taught them by personal example, demonstrating the truth and meaning of his teachings by his own life. And, further, he taught and trained them by means of their own experiences, interpreting to them divine truth as it was demonstrated in their daily life, and sending them forth on missions which would give them experience and skill for service in his name. Following these special missions, Jesus would discuss their experiences with them and guide them into paths of more fruitful living and service for the days ahead. In these ways, and possibly in others, Jesus taught and trained his disciples.

It is important to note here that merely learning Jesus' teachings and outwardly assenting to them did not make one a disciple. Those who learned were expected to respond in Christlike living and service. Jesus made this clear when he said, "If ye *continue* in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed" (Jn. 8: 31). A disciple in Jesus' day, then, was a person who received and responded to Jesus' teaching and training.

3. *Discipleship meant receiving Christian work to do and doing it.* Jesus called, taught, and trained his disciples not for their own welfare only, but that they might assist him in fulfilling his mission. That is why he gave them definite work to do. He laid important and far-reaching responsibilities upon them and ex-



pected them to accept and discharge them. He did this, for example, with a group of twelve, and again with a group of seventy, disciples whom he sent forth to preach, to heal, and to minister in other ways.

*Assignment 3:* Read *Luke 10:1-9* and *Matthew 10:1-8*, and note the specific work Jesus gave his helpers to do.

And then, at the close of his public ministry, he gave his disciples the responsibility to continue and to extend his work throughout the world.

*Assignment 4:* Read these records of the occasion when Jesus commissioned his disciples to carry on his work: *Matthew 28:16-20*; *Luke 24:45-53*; *Acts 1:8*.

This responsibility to carry on and extend Jesus' work applied not only to the apostles, but to all his followers. This is evident from the records in Acts and the epistles, which show that all were expected to witness for Jesus and to serve him, and that many disciples other than the apostles did share this work.

Here again it is important to note that the disciple was to do more than acknowledge Jesus' assignment of specific work; he was faithfully to do the work. Jesus emphasized this when he said, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (*Jn. 15:14*). We may conclude, therefore, that in Jesus' day a disciple was a person who received Christian work to do and did it.

4. *Discipleship meant receiving and using divine power in Christlike living and service.* Jesus knew that his disciples would need spiritual insight and divine power if they were effectively to witness for him. They had already been taught great truths by Jesus; they had heard his message; they knew God's will; they were informed of the Gospel. But two things more they needed: divine guidance into deeper truth, and power to carry on in his name. Jesus, therefore, promised them his own abiding presence and also the Holy Spirit, who would empower them and guide them into all truth.

**Assignment 5:** Read again *Matthew 28: 19, 20*, and note Jesus' promise. Then read *Mark 16: 19, 20*, and note the fulfillment of this promise. Read *John 14: 16, 17* and *Luke 24: 49*, and note Jesus' second promise. Then read *Acts 2: 1-4* to see how this second promise was fulfilled.

The history of the early church shows that as the apostles and disciples believed in Christ's presence, and as they depended upon and used the power of the Holy Spirit, they were able to witness for Christ with great effectiveness (see *Acts 2: 14-21, 41-47; 4: 4*). We conclude, then, that a disciple in Jesus' day was one who received, accepted, depended upon, and used the divine power made available to him by Christ and by the Holy Spirit.

5. *Discipleship meant being personally transformed by the power of God.* We have seen that one aspect of Jesus' mission was to help men to a more abundant life, and that to this end he called, taught, trained, directed, and empowered them. When Jesus did these things, he was not only preparing men to witness for him, but he was also transforming and saving their lives. Repeatedly Jesus said, "Ye must be born again." Jesus, therefore, effected certain changes in the lives of his disciples. They were literally "born again"—spiritually. They were made over by him into his own likeness. The most important thing that Jesus did for his disciples was to transform, convert, change them. We may say, then, that a disciple in Jesus' day was one who was transformed by the power of Jesus Christ.

Thus we see that discipleship in Jesus' day meant five things: (1) receiving a call to follow Jesus and following him; (2) being taught and trained by Jesus and responding to his teaching; (3) being given work to do by Jesus and doing it; (4) accepting and using God's power for Christlike living and service; and, most important of all, (5) having one's own personality and life transformed by Jesus.

### Discipleship in Our Day

Nineteen centuries have passed since Jesus called his first disciples. In these centuries the world has changed in many ways. Christian discipleship, however, has remained basically the

same. Jesus' mission was a universal mission for all the ages; no change has taken place in it. His teachings are a part of eternal truth—a norm and standard for faith and life; no change has taken place in them. His power to transform men and to give abundant life was made available to all men without favor; no change has taken place in that. All these things are timeless and abiding, because Jesus Christ himself is timeless and abiding. He remains "the same yesterday, today, and for ever." He is the one changeless factor in our changing world. It follows that *discipleship means essentially the same today as it did in the first century.*

To be sure, Jesus' call to follow him no longer comes from his own lips; but, as Luther so beautifully puts it, in his explanation of the third article of the Apostles' Creed, "I believe that . . . the Holy Ghost has called me through the Gospel . . . in like manner as he calls . . . the whole Christian Church on earth." True, Jesus no longer teaches and trains men in person as he did when he lived with his first disciples; but, as Luther also says, "I believe that . . . the Holy Spirit has . . . enlightened me by his gifts . . . in like manner as he . . . enlightens . . . the whole Christian Church on earth." And, in the same way, Jesus today helps men to see and respond to opportunities for witness-bearing and Christian service. So, too, he continues to empower men to live abundantly and serve him effectively. In the same manner, he transforms lives today—through the Holy Spirit, who comes to the disciple of our day especially in God's Word. In no essential respect is modern discipleship different from that of the first century; the five things which discipleship meant in Jesus' time still characterize it today.

There are several respects, however, in which modern discipleship may seem to differ from that of the first century. The world today is a far different world from the one in which Jesus lived; the known world is larger; life is more complex; manners and habits of living have changed; situations and problems confront us which Jesus' first disciples never faced; new approaches and methods have been developed in order to carry on the work of the church more effectively. However, these things that have changed are the circumstances and civilization in which men live, not discipleship itself. Of course, discipleship today does not mean trying to make Christian life in our time an exact copy

of what it was in the first century. But even so, discipleship today is fundamentally what it was then: hearing Christ's call, responding to it, learning of him, living his life, being trained by him, working for him, trusting in his presence, using his power, being spiritually transformed by him, and, in all this, experiencing a more abundant life.

### Discipleship and Leadership

It was stated earlier in this chapter that there was a difference between disciples and apostles, and that the latter were specially chosen disciples with special functions to perform. A somewhat similar distinction may be drawn between disciples and leaders today. Leaders are disciples who have been chosen to perform special functions in the church. Since all Christian leaders are, first of all, disciples, it follows that there is a very close relation between leadership and discipleship. Indeed it may be said that effective leadership depends upon faithful discipleship. The truth of this statement will be more evident as we consider some of the practical things which discipleship can do for Christian leaders.

Our study suggests five definite contributions which Christian discipleship can make to Christian leaders:

1. *Discipleship produces a Christlike personality.* The importance of personality—all one's qualities and characteristics—is almost universally recognized. Think of the leaders who have influenced your own life. What do you remember about them? The things they taught you? The methods they used? Hardly. You probably recall most clearly their attitudes, their spirit, their example—that is, their personality. Precisely the same will be true of the people whom you are now endeavoring to lead; they will forget much of what you teach them, but they will remember much of you. Your example—the impression you make by your whole self—will in the long run mean more to them than your specific teaching or leadership efforts. It is of utmost importance, therefore, that Christian leaders have a Christlike personality—one that is worthy of emulation, and one that is a real factor in producing Christian personality in others.

Nothing can do more to help a leader make his personality Christlike, than a vital personal relationship with Jesus. He,

and he alone, can inspire and produce the highest type of personality. Friendship with him, when genuine, is a transforming experience; for, in the last analysis, the development of Christ-like personality is not so much a matter of conformity to laws as it is living close to Jesus Christ and allowing him to direct and re-make one's life. And nothing gives a leader more influence than to have his pupils and followers discover that his life has been transformed by Jesus and is constantly linked with Jesus in a vital fellowship.

2. *Discipleship gives the leader a sense of mission.* No person can be a potent leader in the church who does not feel called to live for some vital and worthy cause. Effective workers always have strong convictions about something which needs to be done. The leader who is a disciple of Jesus will have a very definite sense of mission; for he will recognize that Jesus has called him to share in extending God's kingdom, and he will feel a sense of personal responsibility for this work. Discipleship, therefore, helps the leader to recognize his responsibility to witness for Christ and to help perpetuate and extend his kingdom.

3. *Discipleship gives the leader a central and controlling loyalty.* By its very nature, Jesus' mission is such that it must be made the central and controlling loyalty of a disciple's life if he is to have any worthy part at all in that mission. Jesus demanded such loyalty and devotion of his disciples. They were to seek first his kingdom, and make it their ultimate aim in life. They were to love him above all else, accept him as their Leader, and follow him regardless of consequences. The Christian leader who accepts the obligations of discipleship will, therefore, make devotion to Christ and his kingdom the determining factor in his life. This will, in turn, inspire his pupils and followers, and help them to develop a similar loyalty on their part.

4. *Discipleship gives the leader knowledge and understanding of divine truth.* A Christian leader needs these, for without them he cannot help his followers to know the truth and to live in harmony with it. The greatest source of divine truth is the Word of God. The key to the Word of God is Jesus—Jesus and his Gospel. He, and he alone, is the Truth—the truth about God, man, sin, salvation, life, death, immortality, and God's kingdom. Jesus called men to follow him in order that they might learn

the truth he had to reveal. He taught them, and said, too, that the Holy Spirit would later reveal even deeper truths. Discipleship, therefore, helps the Christian leader to know and understand Jesus and the truth revealed in him. Such knowledge and understanding increase the leader's effectiveness in teaching divine truth to others and in making it fruitful in their lives.

5. *Discipleship gives the leader power.* Effective leadership requires more than a good personality, a sense of mission, a controlling loyalty, and an understanding of divine truth; for a leader may have all these and yet lack the power to perform his mission. The only power which is adequate in Christian service is the power of God. The leader needs this power if he is to help win others to faith in Christ, if he is to help transform lives, if he is to make his efforts bear fruit for Christ's kingdom. He is utterly dependent upon it; he cannot do spiritually effective work without it. Jesus promised his disciples that he would be with them to the end of the world, working with them, empowering them. Paul reminds us that God's strength is "made perfect in weakness," and that "his grace is sufficient." Even though men are weak, God is strong. Discipleship, therefore, is the way for leaders to relate themselves to the Source of all divine power—Jesus Christ himself. As disciples, leaders will be able to make the most of the abilities God has given them. As disciples, they will find God's power added to the best that they do. And no power in the world can stand against a fellowship of disciples who depend upon and use God's power—not even "the gates of hell."

Genuine Christian discipleship, then, does much for the leader: it produces a more Christlike and effective personality; it gives a sense of mission; it provides a central and controlling loyalty; it gives knowledge and insight into divine truth; and it provides an unlimited store of divine power.

### Summary

Christian leaders have a place of supreme importance in the life and work of the church. If they have the right spirit, they will want to improve themselves, to make their leadership as efficient and as effective as is humanly possible. The first thing they will need to do is to establish more securely and make more

vital their personal relationship with Jesus Christ. This relationship is best described by the term "discipleship," which signifies following Jesus, learning of him, living in him, serving him, helping to establish his kingdom, depending upon his divine power, and having one's life transformed by him. Such discipleship is an indispensable factor in Christian leadership. It is the most certain and fruitful way to improve one's entire personality and to increase one's leadership effectiveness.

### Questions for Discussion and Review

1. What is meant by the term "Christian leader" as used in this text? How many different types of leaders are there in your congregation? Name some of them. Are you a leader in the sense in which the term is used here?

2. What do we mean by the term "discipleship"?

3. Why is discipleship the most fundamental relationship of the Christian leader?

4. What five things were involved in being a disciple in Jesus' day? Explain each of them.

5. In what sense is discipleship today essentially the same as in Jesus' day? In what sense different?

6. How did Jesus call disciples in his day? How are they called today?

7. How did Jesus teach and train disciples to be leaders in his day? How are Christian believers taught and trained for leadership today?

8. What work did Jesus give his disciples to do? What work does he give modern disciples to do?

9. What provision did Jesus make for the power his first disciples needed?

10. How did Jesus transform the lives of his first disciples? How does he transform lives today?

11. In what five ways does Christian discipleship help the modern church leader to give a more successful and effective leadership to the cause of Christ?

## Suggestions for Further Study

### *Qualities Required of Christian Disciples*

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus set forth some outstanding qualities required of his disciples. Read this sermon—*Matthew 5-7*—and make a list of these qualities. From the items on your list select five which you feel are of exceptional significance.

### *"A Modern Vision of Jesus"*

Read, in L. D. Weatherhead's *The Transforming Friendship*, the Prologue, entitled "A Modern Vision of Jesus." Then prayerfully think about what kind of person Jesus Christ is to you and how real he is in your life. (You may be interested in reading also Chapter 3 in the same volume.)

### *The Life and Character of the First Disciples*

Read, in W. M. Mackay's *The Men Whom Jesus Made*, the account of one or more of the following persons:

1. Peter—"The Man Who Became a Rock"—Ch. 2;
2. John—"The Disciple Whom Jesus Loved"—Ch. 4;
3. Philip—"The Spirit of Enquiry"—Ch. 6.

## Bibliography

*Note:* Under this heading there appear in each chapter titles of a few of the more important books which have been consulted in the preparation of the chapter. The bibliography is intended primarily for the use of instructors; but students desiring to continue their study of the theme of the chapter will find these books of value. Those marked (\*) are especially recommended.

- Bosworth, E. I. *The Teaching of Jesus and His Apostles*, 1925.
- \*Bruce, A. B. *The Training of the Twelve*, 1930.
- Mackay, W. M. *The Men Whom Jesus Made*, 1933, (Chs. 1, 2).
- \*Schreiber, O. L. *The Lives of the Twelve Apostles*, 1912, (Chs. 1-4).
- Weatherhead, L. D. *The Transforming Friendship*, 1931, (Chs. 1-3, 5, 7, 12).
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## CHAPTER II

# THE CHRISTIAN LEADER AND HIS CHURCH

The Christian leader is first and foremost, as has been indicated, a disciple of Jesus Christ. He is also a member of the Christian Church. Indeed, he has a twofold relationship to the church; he is not only a member, but also a leader. Consequently he has, one might say, a dual responsibility: a responsibility which is inherent in his membership, and a responsibility which grows out of his leadership.

Just as the Christian leader must seek to understand and strengthen his relationship with Jesus Christ, so too he must seek to understand and improve his relation to the church. This is a second essential step in Christian leadership development. In seeking to improve himself the Christian leader must consider (1) his responsibilities as a church member, and (2) his responsibilities as a church leader. This chapter is intended to help him do these two things.

Before a leader can fully comprehend the meaning of church membership and church leadership, he ought to have a fairly clear conception of what the church is, and of what its purpose is.

### The Nature and Purpose of the Christian Church

The term "church" has several different meanings. It is used of the building in which people worship, of a local congregation, and of a given denomination. Each of these uses is a proper one. But none of them conveys the meaning of "church" in its deepest sense. In its most profound meaning the word designates the spiritual fellowship of all true believers in Jesus Christ.

1. *The Church as a Fellowship of Believers.* The Christian Church is a fellowship of people who accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, and who seek to perpetuate his life and work. What is a fellowship? It is something more than a mere group of people or even an officially organized group; it is a group which, whether organized or unorganized, consciously and actively shares in what its members have in common. Thus the

Christian Church is a fellowship because all its members share in a certain faith and in a certain kind of life—in faith in God, in allegiance to Christ, in the possession of the Holy Spirit, in divine worship, in the study of the Word of God, in Christlike service, and in many other common elements.

This conception of the Christian Church as a fellowship was recognized by the leaders of the Protestant Reformation as the only true and scriptural view. They said that the church is "the congregation of saints in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the sacraments rightly administered."<sup>(1)</sup> But they went on to say that the church is more than the outward preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments: "It is in principle a fellowship of faith and the Holy Ghost in hearts. . . . It consists of those persons in whom there is true knowledge and confession of faith and truth . . . the truly believing and righteous men scattered throughout the world."<sup>(2)</sup> Not all members of the externally organized church are necessarily members of the true Christian Church, nor are all persons outside the church's organization necessarily excluded from the true church. The fundamental and important thing is not outward membership, but inner faith. Because it is impossible to know exactly who have and who do not have faith in Christ, and, therefore, who are and who are not members of this spiritual fellowship of believers, the true church has sometimes been described as "invisible," though this does not mean that it cannot be seen. It means rather that its exact membership cannot be accurately determined because it is primarily a spiritual entity.

This spiritual fellowship, the true Christian Church, however, needs some organization in order that there may be order and effectiveness in those outward activities which are essential to its life and growth. We may, therefore, quite properly think of the church as an organized body of Christian believers.

2. *The Church as an Organization.* When people who believe in Christ unite to form a church organization, they do so for the express purpose of maintaining and extending their Christian faith and life. The constitution they adopt usually states this

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<sup>(1)</sup> The Augsburg Confession, Art. VII. H. E. Jacobs, *The Book of Concord*, p. 39.

<sup>(2)</sup> Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Ch. IV. H. E. Jacobs, *The Book of Concord*, pp. 165, 166.

common purpose; for example, the preface of one model constitution for congregations reads thus: "We, members of the church of Christ, desiring to manifest that inner unity which we have with one another in the common confession, defense, and maintenance of our faith in joint efforts for the extension of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, unite in the adoption of the following constitution." Accordingly, a congregation is primarily a voluntary organization of believers for the purpose of maintaining and extending their common faith.

What is true of the organization of a congregation is equally true of the organization of the church's larger units, such as a synod or a national body. A synod is an organization of a number of congregations who, through their authorized representatives, provide for their common needs and carry on their common tasks. The purpose of a synod is, therefore, the more effective maintenance and extension of the faith and life of its congregations, and, therefore, of its total membership. A general church body is, likewise, an organization of congregations already united in synods, and its purpose is fundamentally identical with that of the synod, the congregation, and the individual believer. Basically, then, all organizations of the church, whether local or general, are made up of individual Christians, all of whom have a share in the privileges and responsibilities of those organizations. Each individual Christian is, accordingly, a member not only of a congregation, but also of the church at large. He owes the whole church allegiance and support. It, in turn, operates in his behalf in the maintenance and extension of his Christian faith and life.

3. *The Church as a Living Organism.* Though Christian believers express their faith in and through an organization which we call "the church," the church is more than an organization. It is a living, throbbing, growing organism—something alive and life-giving. St. Paul described it as "the body of Christ," and said that Christ is "the Head of the church." The church and all its members are, therefore, dependent upon the church and its members to act for him and to carry on his work in the world. As long as the church and its members remain in vital relationship with Christ, the church will be a life-giving organism in which Christ dwells and through which he works.

The church is, therefore, a spiritual fellowship of all believers in Christ. This fellowship finds expression in church organizations, local and general. These organizations, in so far as they are in vital relationship with Jesus Christ, the great Head of the church, are living organisms in which Christ dwells and through which he works.

4. *The Purpose of the Church.* The primary purpose of the church, whether we think of it in its smaller units (congregations) or in its larger units (synods, general bodies), is essentially, as has been indicated, to preserve and extend the Gospel, with all that this implies. This involves evangelizing, educating, and serving. The church seeks to have all men come to saving faith in Jesus Christ. Accordingly, the church's purpose, first of all, embraces evangelism—the preaching of the Gospel of salvation to the unsaved. Immediately, however, a second aspect of the church's work comes into play: education; for souls need to be edified, built up, developed. This the church does through preaching and teaching, through worship and the administration of the sacraments, through fellowship and service. And, finally, the church gives expression to its Christian faith in deeds of love and mercy. It is thus that the church fulfills its purpose: through evangelism, through education, and through service.

It is in a church of this nature and purpose that Christian leaders have a place. It is in and through such a church that they serve God and man. What is the relation and the obligation of the church worker to this church? As has already been said, the Christian worker has a twofold relationship and a twofold responsibility. In the first place he is a member; in the second place, a leader. Membership has its obligations; so does leadership. Let us consider them separately.

### **The Significance of Membership in the Church**

Every Christian worker is, or most certainly should be, a member of the church. This very relationship brings with it definite obligations. These obligations exist entirely apart from and prior to any and all leadership responsibilities. Let us note, first of all, the various types of members in the church.

1. *Types of Members in the Church.* The Lutheran Church recognizes three types of members: baptized, confirmed, and

communing. A baptized member is any person who has been received into the church through the sacrament of Baptism. A confirmed member is any baptized person who has personally assumed his baptismal vows in the rite of confirmation. (By an extension of the term, persons otherwise received into full membership are also classified as confirmed members.) A communing member is any confirmed (or otherwise received) member who partakes of the Holy Communion at least once a year.

2. *The Obligations of Church Members.* Persons who have been baptized and confirmed (or baptized and otherwise received into the church) have certain very definite obligations by virtue of the very fact that they are church members. Some of these obligations are set forth in the order for Baptism and for confirmation; others are specified in the congregation's constitution.

*Assignment 1:* If you were baptized in infancy and later confirmed, look up the confirmation service in your service book and make a list of the obligations which you assumed at that time. If you were baptized as an adult, look up the service for adult Baptism and make a similar list. If you were received into the church in some other way, follow either of the above-mentioned procedures.

In addition to these obligations, others, as has been said, are specified in the congregation's constitution. There is considerable difference between constitutions, but the following list, drawn from one model constitution, indicates the general duties and responsibilities of church members:

*Typical Obligations of Church Members*

- (1) Regular attendance upon divine services;
- (2) Regular partaking of the Lord's Supper;
- (3) Diligent reading of the Word of God;
- (4) Daily living of a godly life;
- (5) Early bringing of children to Baptism;
- (6) Constant devotion to the Christian education of their children;

- (7) Peaceable living with fellow Christians;
- (8) Loving regard for needy men everywhere;
- (9) Liberal support of the congregation and the church at large;
- (10) General co-operation in the life and growth of the church.

All these obligations are binding upon members of the church as long as they permit their names to be kept on the membership roll. Dr. H. E. Jacobs has written pointedly of this matter:

"When, in the exercise of their Christian liberty, Christian people assume the obligations of membership in church organizations, these obligations remain binding upon them as long as they continue in connection with such organizations. Church membership is like the marriage covenant; this brings responsibilities with its privileges, which the previously free husband or wife cannot disregard or neglect at pleasure. The inherent freedom of a Christian prior to his assuming the obligations of church membership cannot be validly urged as justifying the disregard by him of any rules of the organization so long as he enjoys the privileges to which membership entitles him. This applies to groups as well as to individuals."<sup>(9)</sup>

It is upon the members' fulfillment of these obligations that the ultimate efficiency and effectiveness of congregations, synods, and general church bodies depend.

While these duties rest upon every member of the church, they are especially incumbent upon persons who hold places of leadership, for the church and its members have a right to expect that its leaders will first of all be faithful and devoted members; that they will fully meet the ordinary responsibilities of membership; and that they will set a worthy example to all others. If leaders fail in these basic obligations, how can they succeed in those additional ones which grow out of their leadership? It behooves every Christian worker, therefore, before he even thinks of the obligations of leadership, to examine himself as to his membership responsibilities.

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(<sup>9</sup>) F. H. Knubel, et al., *Our Church*, p. 33.

**Assignment 2:** Study the list of membership obligations which you discovered in your reading of the baptismal or confirmation service. Are you personally living up to the sacred vows which you made before God and his church? Study likewise the list of obligations drawn from a model constitution (or get a copy of your own congregation's constitution and study its requirements). Are you personally meeting these responsibilities? In what respects can you improve yourself as a member of the church? Such improvement is an essential step toward the improvement of your leadership.

## The Significance of Leadership in the Church

In addition to holding membership in the church, the Christian leader holds a peculiar place in its life and work because he is a leader. A leadership position adds to one's opportunities, but it also adds to one's responsibilities. The special obligation of a leader will become clearer as the meaning of leadership is understood.

1. *The Meaning of "Leadership."* The meaning of the term "leader," as used in this text, has already been discussed. (*Read again Chapter I, pp. 7, 8.*) To be a leader in the church does not mean that one will dictate its policies, dominate its activities, or rule over its members; but rather that he will dedicate himself to its interests, welfare, and service. Leadership in the church is loyalty, guidance, counsel, helpfulness. It is the consecration of abilities, time, and energies in order that others may find salvation in Christ and abundant life in God. Genuine leadership is a ministry to the real needs of the church and its constituency.

2. *The Importance of Leadership in the Church.* In a general way this matter also has already been discussed. (*Read again Chapter I, pp. 8, 9.*) But there is another angle from which the leader's importance may be viewed. A well-known religious educator recently said, "The program of the church is ninety per cent leader." Is this true or is it an exaggeration? Who, for instance, select and state the working goals of the church? Its

leaders. Who determine the methods and procedures of the church's organizations? Usually, its leaders. Who secure the necessary equipment and prepare the necessary materials with which the church, its schools, and its societies carry on their work? Again, its leaders. The influence of the church's leaders is felt in almost every sphere of its life. It is the leaders who normally have the most far-reaching power in congregations, in conferences, in synods, and in the church at large. This power rests in the hands of leaders, not because they dictate and dominate, but because their position gives them the opportunity, and because they dedicate themselves, think, pray, work, and seek ways, to be of greater service. The importance of church leaders for the church's growth and progress, cannot well be exaggerated. The finest plan of activities, the highest purposes, the best materials and equipment, the most modern methods, and the most logical scheme of organization are lifeless and of little value without consecrated and skilled leaders to use them. Any effort to improve these other factors will be futile if leadership improvement is neglected.

3. *The Distinctive Place of Leaders in Congregations.* Because of the primary place which congregations have in the entire organization and work of the Christian Church, leaders in congregations occupy a very strategic position. It is largely in congregations and under their auspices that people are evangelized and won for Christ. It is largely in congregations that the foundation of a truly Christian education is laid. It is largely in congregations that people are first led to devote themselves to the service of God and fellowmen. It is largely congregations who support the program of the church at large. Congregations are the front-line trenches of the church in its spiritual warfare against evil. They are the power houses of spiritual energy which inspire and equip people to live the Christian life. They are the truest manifestation of the real nature of the church—a fellowship of believers.

Accordingly, the place of leaders in congregations is a truly distinctive place. They are the ones on whom, collectively, the whole church's effectiveness largely depends. If they fail in their responsibilities, the whole church will fail; if they succeed, the whole church will succeed. When a congregation's leaders move forward, the rest of the members are almost cer-



tain to follow them; and thus the whole congregation makes progress. When entire congregations move forward, synods make progress. When synods make progress, the whole church advances. Almost everything essential for the success of the church, from the standpoint of the human agencies involved, depends on leaders in congregations. Herein lies a challenge and a call to every Christian worker to consecrate himself to Christ, to use his God-given abilities in the service of the church, and to make the best of every opportunity to improve himself and the church.

4. *The Obligations of Church Leaders.* The unique place which leaders have in the church naturally brings with it definite obligations. These obligations are just as significant for and binding upon leaders, as are the obligations of church members. The general obligations of church leaders will be considered in Chapter III on "The Task of the Christian Leader," and to some extent in all the other chapters of this text.

### Summary

The Christian Church is a fellowship of persons who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. It is the primary purpose of this fellowship to maintain and extend its Christian faith (the Gospel) and life. In order to realize this purpose more effectively, the members of this fellowship form church organizations, both local (congregations) and general (synods and general bodies). The purpose of these organizations is identically the same as that of the spiritual fellowship itself. Every member of the Christian fellowship, whether inside or outside a definite church organization, has certain fundamental obligations. Only as its members meet these obligations can the church effectively fulfill its mission in the world. The church, in addition to having members, has leaders. These are persons who have special responsibilities to perform in the work of the church—responsibilities delegated to them by the members. Because of these special responsibilities, leaders occupy especially significant positions. This is particularly true of leaders in congregations, who hold a strategic place in the whole program and work of the church. All church leaders, therefore, and particularly leaders in congregations, are under obligation to their Lord and

to his church to make the most of their opportunities for effective Christian service. Only as they do this, can the primary objective of the Christian Church be realized.

### Questions for Discussion and Review

1. What different meanings has the term "church"? Formulate a working definition of "the church" on the basis of its scriptural meaning?
2. What is the distinctive mission of the Christian Church?
3. Why is organization necessary in the church? What is a congregation? A synod? A general church body? Why are these organized? Why is a congregation called the "primary unit" of the church's organization?
4. What twofold relation does the church worker sustain to the church? Which of these two aspects of his relation is of more fundamental importance?
5. What are the outstanding obligations of church leaders *as church members*? Where may a statement of these obligations be found?
6. Why is leadership in the church of great importance? Why is leadership in congregations of particularly great significance?
7. What are some of the outstanding obligations of church leaders *as leaders*? (Although these have not yet been discussed in detail, it will be of value to think through this question now.)

### Suggestions for Further Study

#### *The Purpose of Your Congregation and the Duties of Its Members*

Secure a copy of the charter and of the constitution of your congregation. Study them and note any items which set forth the purpose of your congregation. Note also any items that set forth the duties of members in your congregation. Compare your findings with the statements on the purpose of the church and the obligations of its members given in this chapter. (It would be interesting also to study the constitution of the particular church organization in which you are working—Sunday school, young people's society, brotherhood, missionary society, etc.—to discover how its purpose and membership obligations compare with those of your congregation as a whole.)

*The Place of the Congregation in the Life and Work of the Church*

Read F. H. Knubel, et al., *Our Church*, pp. 153-159, on the congregation as the source of the church's efficiency.

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## CHAPTER III

### THE TASK OF THE CHRISTIAN LEADER

We have considered the two most fundamental relationships of the Christian leader. It is evident from our study thus far that effective Christian leadership depends to a large extent on (1) vital personal relationship with Christ, and (2) loyal and active membership in his church.

There is another important consideration upon which effective Christian leadership depends: a clear understanding and deep appreciation of one's task. A further step in improving one's leadership, therefore, is to secure this understanding and appreciation. This chapter aims to guide the student in taking this step.

At the outset it will be helpful for every reader to think of his own task in the church and to ask himself, "Just what is my task? For what results am I supposed to be working?" Or, if the reader is not yet an active leader in the church, he may ask himself, "What is the real task for which I am preparing myself?" Before going further, try to answer these questions for yourself by carrying out the following assignment.

*Assignment 1:* Write out, as clearly and as definitely as you can, what you consider to be your task in the church. Begin by listing specific duties and responsibilities. Then, think of your task in its larger setting: What, ultimately, are the few big things I am trying to do?

One way of determining the fundamental task of *all* Christian leaders is to analyze all the specific tasks of all the different types of leaders in the church, with a view to discovering the great, fundamental task in which all are engaged and to which their many specific tasks contribute. But this would give us information only on the task of Christian leaders as they now see it. Something more is needed. What is required is some objective standard with which we may compare our present efforts in the church and by which we may determine our real

task. This standard is the God-given mission of Jesus Christ and of the Christian Church.

What this chapter seeks to do, then, is not to present a detailed list of the specific duties of various leaders in the church (this is impossible because of their infinite number and variety, and unnecessary for our purpose) but, on the basis of the historic mission of Christ and the church, to suggest those fundamental tasks which are common to all Christian leaders and which all should be helping to accomplish. We shall discuss three fundamental tasks, or rather three fundamental aspects of one ultimate task for which every leader in the church has a definite responsibility: (1) transforming individuals; (2) building the church; and (3) furthering the kingdom of God among men. Taken together, these give a quite comprehensive view of the total task of the Christian leader.

### Transforming Individuals

The first task of the Christian leader is to *help transform individuals into Christlike personalities*. Jesus' mission was to save men. Everything he did—calling, teaching, training, directing, and empowering people—was a means of helping them to experience a spiritual rebirth, to live more abundantly, and to become more like God, their Father. To this end, too, Jesus trained disciples and founded the church.

Accordingly, the church's mission also is to save men. Everything it does is intended to help people to become more Christlike. It preaches the Gospel, administers the sacraments, and makes its full ministry available to men, in order that God's power may make them his Christlike children. The primary task of the Christian leader, therefore, is to help transform individuals by means of those aids which Christ and his church make available.

It is recognized that the power to transform men lies with God alone. It was Jesus' divine power which enabled him to transform the lives of his disciples. It was the power of the Holy Spirit which enabled the early church to win men to Christ. It is that same power which today enables Christian leaders to help others to develop Christian personality. Leaders are dependent upon God for the power to make others Christlike.

There are three basic procedures which the Christian leader may use in bringing the power of God to bear upon lives: evangelism, education, and Christian service. These three were used by Jesus in his public ministry and they have been an integral part of the church's program through the centuries. They are so fundamental and indispensable that we may think of them as part of the task of every Christian leader. We shall consider them as interrelated tasks contributory to the larger task of transforming individual lives.

1. *Evangelism.* The first step in transforming persons into the likeness of Christ is to extend to the unsaved Christ's call to follow him, in order that they may find in him the power that transforms. The first thing Jesus did in his ministry was to extend such a call to men. He called them that they might learn of him and receive his saving power. The church, too, has throughout its history engaged in such missionary activity; it has called men to follow Jesus. It has preached him and his Gospel as the supreme value of life, and has proclaimed his power as the only power whereby men may be saved.

Christian leaders, therefore, must point men to Christ. They must, in a sense, be missionaries, evangelists. They must exalt him in their own lives; they must witness for him by word and deed; they must hold him up before the world as the power that leads to life abundant. Whatever means they may use to do this—personal evangelism, baptism, church publicity, distributing Bibles and Christian literature, teaching, preaching—they must keep uppermost the task of pointing men to Christ. This task is not the responsibility only of church leaders; it belongs to all members, for Jesus calls all to be "fishers of men" and to "make disciples of all nations." But the major responsibility certainly rests with the leaders of the church. It is they who must set the example in the faithful performance of this task and inspire others to assist in it.

*Assignment 2:* Make a list of the opportunities which you have to help win people to faith in Christ and to membership in his church. Ask yourself: Am I making the most of these opportunities?

2. *Education.* A second procedure in transforming individuals into Christlike personalities is education. Jesus used this procedure; he taught and trained men. He knew that if people were to experience a spiritual re-birth, they must learn the truth he had to reveal about God and his love, about themselves and their sin, about himself and his saving power, about their duty to their fellowmen, and about many other things. So Jesus enlightened and transformed men's minds with divine truth. Further, Jesus willed that Christian education should be a basic activity in the program of the church. When he sent out his first disciples, he said, "Go, preach." When he commissioned the apostles to make disciples of all nations, he told them to teach all the things he had taught them. From the first century to our own day, the church has sought to develop Christlike personalities through a preaching and teaching ministry—through Christian education.

So, Christian leaders today must make Christian education a basic part of their task. Men must not only be invited and called to follow Christ and to join the church, but they must be edified, enlightened, and guided into divine truth. Children must not only be baptized; they must be instructed in the Christian faith, in order that they may themselves confirm it and assume their place as intelligent members of the church. All believers need regular and systematic instruction and training in all phases of the Christian life. They must learn to worship, and to do so intelligently; they must learn the truths of the Scriptures and be taught how to apply them in personal and social Christian living; they must understand the purpose and program of the church and participate intelligently in all phases of its life; they must appreciate the nature and value of the Sacraments and be faithful in the use of them; and they must be helped to know and do many other things which are part of the Christian life.

In this task of Christian education, all leaders in the congregation have a part: parents, as they train their children in the home; Sunday school teachers, as they instruct and guide their classes; officers and superintendents in Sunday schools and other organizations, as they lead in worship, present a topic, or carry on routine administrative and supervisory duties; organists and choirs, as they lead in worship; members of councils and committees, as they determine policies and plan programs; pastors,

as they preach the Word and teach candidates for Baptism and confirmation; publicity committees, as they spread the message of the church; and all the rest. One of the most significant trends in modern church life is the increasing emphasis on all that a congregation does as being a part of a process which helps individuals to grow in Christian faith and life. Think of what this means to you as a leader: All that you do affects in some way the growth of Christian personality in those you touch; all your specific tasks are an opportunity for you to co-operate with God in transforming individual lives into Christlike personalities.

*Assignment 3:* Think of your specific task in the church. Have you ever thought of it as an essential part of the educational program of the church, a means of helping people to develop Christlike personality, an opportunity to work with God in transforming lives? Are you making the most of the opportunities which your position affords you?

3. *Service.* A third procedure in transforming individuals into Christlike personalities is that of rendering service to them. Of course, in evangelizing and educating people, the church renders a Christian service of incalculable value. But we have in mind here a loving ministry to the many needs of humanity other than those met by the specifically evangelistic and educational work of the church. Such service was one of the basic methods which Jesus used to save and transform men's lives. He fed the hungry, healed the sick, raised the dead, restored unbalanced minds, comforted the sorrowing, gave forgiveness to penitent sinners, and inspired the fearful. Further, Jesus trained and empowered his first disciples to carry on this kind of work. He enlisted their help in feeding the hungry; he sent them on missions to heal the sick; he taught them to share his love with others. From the days of those first disciples, the church has carried on Christ's ministry of loving service. Think of the world-wide service program of the church today: its homes for orphans and the aged; its hospitals and dispensaries; its settlement houses; its relief for the poor, and the countless other types of loving service which Christians extend to each other and to non-Christians.



In this task, every Christian leader can and should have a part. He may support generously the service program of his own congregation and of the church at large; he may personally, or with his church class or group, do something to meet the needs of the poor, the sick, the unfortunates, the orphans, the aged, the imprisoned, and the lonesome, in his own community. He should give special attention to the needs of members and friends of the church, but by no means limit his loving service to them. Nothing has a greater transforming influence on people than a Christlike ministry to them in their needs.

**Assignment 4:** Make a list of the opportunities for service which membership and leadership in your congregation afford you. Have you taken advantage of this means of transforming the lives of people?

The first and most fundamental task of all Christian leaders, then, is to transform individuals into Christlike personalities by the power of God. To this task Jesus gave his life; to it the church throughout its history has devoted itself; and to it today Christian leaders must give themselves with utter consecration.

### Building the Church

A second very important task of the Christian leader is to *help build the Christian Church*—to help in the development and improvement of the church as a fellowship of believers and as an organized body of Christian disciples. This contributes to the transformation of lives into Christlike personalities; and, further, it provides a means whereby transformed lives may thrive, grow, and express themselves. Jesus himself was devoted to this task of building the church. He laid its foundations; made provision for its leadership, growth, and perpetuation; gave it its saving message; specified the work it was to do; endowed it with power; and promised his everlasting presence and guidance. And, as its living Head and Lord, he leads it today.

Throughout the past, the church, too, has done much to build itself—to perpetuate, extend, and improve its life and work. It has organized and re-organized itself to meet ever new conditions; it has trained and sent out ever new leaders to carry on

its work in the world; it has interpreted and re-interpreted its message in the light of new discoveries of truth; it has constantly expanded its programs and sought ever new fields of endeavor; it has repeatedly examined itself with a view to finding out its own weaknesses and overcoming them; it has labored in season and out of season to perfect itself in order that it might fulfill its God-given mission. Thus throughout its history the church has been engaged in building itself. The church today must continue this work. It is one of its fundamental tasks—a primary aspect of its great, all-inclusive task. It must continue to improve itself, to make itself more effective, to extend itself, to build itself up in faith and life and work.

In this task, every Christian leader must share. Every leader owes it to his Lord, to his church, and to present and future generations, to make the church the best possible instrument for transforming men, and for uniting these men in a life-giving fellowship with God and each other. There are many ways in which leaders can help to improve the church: by keeping its mission true to that of Jesus; by improving its policies and methods of operation; by improving its organization; by developing the quality of its activities—its worship, its study, its fellowship, its services; by improving its buildings and equipment; by enlarging its membership; and by improving their own leadership. What a difference it would make in the effectiveness of the church's entire life if every leader in the whole church would consistently and courageously improve those phases of the church's life which he touches!

*Assignment 5:* Make a list of some of the conditions in the organization or group in which you are a leader, which indicate the need for improvement. Select several of these and try to effect the needed improvements. This will be a definite contribution to the improvement of the whole church.

### **Furthering the Kingdom of God among Men**

A third task of the Christian leader is to *help further the kingdom of God among men*. This is closely related to transforming lives and to building the church; indeed, as has been pointed

out, the three tasks are all constituent parts of a single, all-inclusive task. There can be no doubting the fact that this—the furthering of God's kingdom among men—was a major aspect of Jesus' mission. The term "kingdom of God" was much upon his lips. He preached it all through his ministry. This kingdom was first of all a spiritual kingdom within men's hearts. But it was more than this. It was a kingdom which was to find expression also in men's social relationships. Man's life with God was to show itself in a new life with his fellowmen. One cannot read the teachings of Jesus without becoming convinced of this. If "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God" was the first commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor" was the second; and Jesus said that this second was like unto the first. Jesus was devoted to something more than the transformation of individuals and to something more than the building of his church; he was devoted to the establishment of the kingdom of God among men.

The Christian Church, too, has not been unmindful of its social responsibilities. At times it has perhaps under-stressed its kingdom-building mission, and has focused its attention too exclusively upon its soul-saving and church-building work; but, in general, it has kept before it this important aspect of its task. Wherever its Gospel has been preached in all its fullness and power, inevitably more good will, love, justice, forgiveness, brotherhood, and peace have prevailed among men. Its teachings have had no small part in the elevation of womanhood, in the reduction of friction between classes and nations, in the abolition of slavery, in the raising of moral standards, in the determination of many to eliminate war and to bring peace on earth, and in numberless other social improvements. The Christian Church has considerable kingdom-building achievement to its credit; it has done much to produce a more Christian social order. It must continue to do so. There are social forces at work which are destructive of the ideals of God's kingdom; these the church must endeavor to eliminate. There are persons who are indifferent or hostile to the establishment of God's kingdom among men; these the church must endeavor to convert. There are deeply ingrained tendencies in life which are contrary to the growth of God's kingdom; these the church must endeavor to

overcome. The need for kingdom building and social improvement is evident on every hand. Our world is far from being anything like a kingdom of God. The church must continue to bring its Gospel, with all its social implications, to bear upon the life of men, of institutions, and of the world.

It is a part of every Christian leader's task to help in this aspect of the church's work. To accomplish this task, he can strive to perfect his own relationships with others; he can participate personally in movements which are designed to promote man's spiritual and social well-being; he can support the church in its efforts to bring righteousness into the whole fabric of the world's life; he can help the members of his class, or other church group, to see how they can contribute to world betterment and can inspire them to devote themselves to bringing about this betterment; and he can, above all, point men to Christ, the King of God's kingdom.

*Assignment 6:* What can you personally do to help build the kingdom of God among men, to help improve men's spiritual and social relationships? Try to think of some very specific things. Do you not think you should endeavor to do them?

### Summary

We have considered three fundamental tasks of Christian leaders: the transformation of individuals by the power of God, the building of the church of Jesus Christ, the furthering of God's kingdom among men. These three tasks are really one; they are three aspects of a great central task: *the extension of Christ's grace (love) and rule in the whole life of man*. Everything any Christian leader does should contribute in some way to the fulfillment of this God-given task.

As a disciple of Jesus Christ, as a member and worker in the Christian Church—

“Accept the task  
And make that task your own;  
By and through it  
Your talents shall be shown.

"Power grows on power,  
So step by step improve;  
Avoid the easy way—  
The common groove.

"On trained discernment  
Fix your firmest thought;  
This duty comes as pleasure  
And not with trouble fraught."

—A. H. McQuilkin.

### Questions for Discussion and Review

1. Why is it important for the Christian leader to have a clear understanding of his basic task?

2. To what sources can the Christian leader go to determine just what his task is?

3. In what sense do all Christian leaders have the same fundamental tasks? What are the three major tasks which they all have in common?

4. What is the primary and most important task of the Christian leader? What three procedures does the church use in performing this primary task?

5. What is evangelism, and what opportunities are there for evangelistic (or missionary) work in your community? What can you personally do to help evangelize your community?

6. What is Christian education? What is its relation to evangelism? How many of the organizations and activities in your congregation are educational? Is your present task an educational one?

7. What is Christian service? How does it help to transform individual lives? In what service activities is your church engaged? Is it neglecting any opportunities for Christian service?

8. Why is building the church a basic task of Christian leaders? What are some of the most needed improvements in your congregation? What can you do to help achieve these improvements?

9. What is meant by "furthering the kingdom of God among men"? Why is this a part of the church's task? What are some

specific things which your class, church society, or congregation can do to help establish better relationships among men?

10. What is the one, all-embracing task of Christian leaders? How can leaders contribute to the accomplishment of this task?

### Suggestions for Further Study

#### *The Basic Purposes of the Church*

Read and evaluate at least one of the following:

1. The statement of the "Objectives of Christian Education" found in a pamphlet of the International Council of Religious Education, entitled, *The Educational Work of the Church*, pp. 5, 6.
2. The statement on "The Task of the Church in Relation to Social Ills" found in W. H. Greever's *Facts and Forces in the Social Order*, pp. 13-16.
3. The discussion of "The Individual versus the Social Aim of the Church" found in H. C. Munro's *Christian Education in Your Church*, pp. 41, 42.

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## CHAPTER IV

# THE CHRISTIAN LEADER IN A CHANGING WORLD

As a disciple of Jesus Christ and as a member of the Christian Church, the Christian leader has a task to perform: to extend Christ's grace and rule in the whole life of man. This task he must accomplish, if he is to accomplish it at all, in the world in which he lives. He cannot carry on his work in a new world of ideal men living in ideal conditions; he must carry it on in the world as it is, with men and conditions as they are. This self-evident fact at once lays upon him the necessity of understanding the world, particularly those elements and currents of its life which have a bearing upon men's thoughts, and attitudes, and actions. Unless he understands, at least to some degree, the world in which men are living, he cannot hope, even with his divine message, to influence very effectively their life; he cannot hope to bring them under the grace and the gracious dominion of the eternal Christ.

Manifestly it is impossible in a course such as this to enter into an exhaustive treatment of the complex life of our modern world; nor would such a treatment be particularly profitable for our practical purposes. But it may prove helpful to consider quite briefly a few of the more important factors of modern life which are influencing men's lives and affecting their outlook and general modes of thought; for these have a definite bearing, directly or indirectly, upon the way the Christian leader must approach his task. This chapter aims to lead the reader into some little understanding and appreciation of a few trends of our times which are affecting people's thought and life, and to show how these changes affect, in turn, the work which the Christian leader is endeavoring to perform.

## An Age of Change

Perhaps the outstanding characteristic of the world of our day is the phenomenal change which is taking place in the whole of its life. Our age has been called "an age of change." True, the

world has always been changing. Almost 2,500 years ago the Greek philosopher Heraclitus made the profound observation, "All things flow." He meant that the entire universe is constantly in a state of flux. Nevertheless, though change is a characteristic of all ages, it is doubtful whether such tremendous and far-reaching changes as have occurred and are occurring in our age have ever before taken place with the same rapidity. Truly revolutionary are the changes which are occurring everywhere—in science, in industry, in economics, in government, in education, in religion, in social life. Many of them are taking place so quickly and so quietly that men are puzzled, confused, perplexed—unable to adjust themselves to the kaleidoscopic changes all about them.

Of the many changes which are taking place today, four would seem to require the particular attention of Christian leaders because of their special effect upon the thinking of people: (1) the increasing emphasis on the scientific spirit and method; (2) man's increasing conquest of nature; (3) our changing homes and family life; and (4) changes in the theory and practice of education. Each of these has a very definite bearing upon the Christian leader's work. Let us consider these in somewhat more detail, then seek to discover how they affect people, and finally try to see how they challenge the church worker to be, and do, and give his best for the extension of Christ's grace and rule in the whole life of our day. Consider, first, these four changes:

1. *The Increasing Emphasis on the Scientific Spirit and Method.* We are living in an age of science. Science says, "Get the facts and face them honestly and fearlessly." This spirit is increasingly pervading all fields of human thought and action. There is an earnest and unrelenting search for truth. Science demands evidence, and it demands it in every sphere of life. In 1899, Dr. E. D. Starbuck wrote, "Science has conquered one field after another, until now it is entering the most complex, the most inaccessible, and, of all, the most sacred domain—that of religion." In the twentieth century, the scientific spirit and method have challenged the very faith and life of the church by examining its beliefs, creeds, customs, methods, and program, as to their truth and value.

2. *Man's Increasing Conquest of Nature.* By using the scientific spirit and method, man has tremendously multiplied his



knowledge of the physical universe. This knowledge has given him power to conquer the forces of nature and to use them for his own ends. Consider, for instance, man's many conquests in our own generation in travel and communication, in industry, in medicine, and in other areas of life. This increase of knowledge, with its consequent conquest of nature, has affected man's estimate of his own worth, importance, and power. It has made many men more self-sufficient and self-assured, and has even led some to feel that God is no longer necessary in the scheme of things.

**3. *Our Changing Homes and Family Life.*** The home has always been mankind's basic social institution. It has for countless centuries held a place of primary importance. There was a time when the home provided for practically all men's basic needs: it raised the food, made the clothing, cared for the sick, educated the children, provided the fellowship and entertainment, and directed the family's religious and moral life. Gradually, however, a variety of outside agencies—factories, stores, hospitals, clubs, amusement places, schools, governments, and churches—developed and began to take over many of the functions which originally belonged to the home. This process has been greatly accelerated in our own day. In many places and in many circles the home no longer occupies the central position which it once held; it has lost some of its former prestige and not a little of its earlier influence. And there are evidences that this process is by no means at an end.

The church must recognize this fact, seek to stabilize the home, and help to make it a more positive Christian force in the life of people. This means that leaders in the church must understand the function of the home, the things that are happening to it, and how they themselves can effectively help both parents and children to discharge their Christian responsibilities in the family circle.

**4. *Changes in the Theory and Practice of Education.*** Many important changes have taken place in education since the turn of the twentieth century. In recent years we have heard much of a "new" and a "progressive" education. Many new theories of education have been developed. It is now widely accepted that education is a lifelong, all-inclusive process, not limited to

formal schooling and study, but embracing all life's experiences. Accordingly, the aim of education has been expanded to take in the development of the whole life. In order to accomplish this all-inclusive aim, efforts are being made to bring all phases of education under the control of a single, comprehensive program.

These new views of education have, naturally, had a tremendous effect on educational practices. New types of schools have sprung up; new methods of teaching have been developed; new kinds of educational materials have been produced. Think, for example, of the development of night, extension, correspondence, and summer schools; of such educational devices as projects, discussion groups, conferences, personal counseling, visual education; of the new kinds of textbooks, courses, and program guides which are in use today. Astounding have been the changes which have taken place in educational practice.

These changes in the field of general education have not been without their influence upon the educational work of the church. It could not well be otherwise. Were the church unwilling to make changes in its program, it would be forced to make them to hold the interest and to secure the participation of persons who have been trained under the new system in the public and private schools of the land.

### The Effect of Our Changing World upon People

These changes, and many others, naturally have an effect upon people. Indeed, every significant change affects them in some way, and, either directly or indirectly, affects even their spiritual well-being. Since the church is concerned primarily with human beings and their spiritual welfare, its leaders should know how the changes which are taking place influence the thinking and living of men. It is essential, therefore, that we examine, at least briefly, some of the things that are happening to people as a result of these changes in our modern world.

1. *A Changed Attitude toward Authority and Tradition.* There is a growing tendency on the part of many to question all traditional authority. People are no longer willing to accept without proof or good reason the beliefs, standards, customs, laws, and methods of the past. The mere fact that these are old is no longer enough to commend them. People want intellectual free-

dom. They want to experiment and to discover values for themselves. For an increasing number of people, such ancient authorities as the Bible, the church, and the home no longer have the appeal and the influence which they once had. Naturally, this situation creates difficulties for the church worker.

**Assignment 1:** Think of the members of your own church group — your Sunday school class, your church society, your congregation. Do any of them have this attitude toward traditional authority? If so, what problems does this create for your work with them?

**2. A Changed Attitude toward God and Spiritual Realities.** An alarming number of people, many of them earnest and sincere, are finding it difficult to believe in God and other spiritual realities. Some feel that science has crowded God out of the universe and made him unnecessary. Others find it difficult to grasp any realities which are beyond the reach of their physical senses; spiritual things seem vague and unreal. Still others are confused by the apparent conflict between the teachings of the church and the teachings of the sciences. Others again, under the influence of the theory that all things are relative and tentative, find it impossible to accept revealed, eternal truth. Hence they cannot attain to deep, compelling convictions; they are never finally certain of truth, and live in a continuous state of doubt and perplexity. Such doubts and intellectual difficulties challenge Christian leaders so to understand their own faith, with its historical and rational foundations, that they can meet these attitudes intelligently, sympathetically, tactfully, and convincingly.

**Assignment 2:** Think of the persons whose lives you are helping to mold. Do any of them have difficulty in believing in God, in Christ, in the Holy Spirit, in salvation, in the sacraments, in prayer, in everlasting life?

**3. A Changed Outlook on Life.** There are several distinct trends today in men's outlook on life. One is decidedly pessimistic: man is an infinitesimal speck in this great universe; he

must fight his way against many forces and enemies; the future is uncertain; truth is relative; human nature is hopelessly corrupt; death ends all; nothing matters very much; life isn't worth living. Another is extremely optimistic: man can subdue the earth; he is all-important; his knowledge and power are capable of infinite development; he will some day become a superman; life is good and glorious; there are no sins or weaknesses which man cannot overcome; he holds his fate in his own hands. Between these two there is a middle course—a view which recognizes man's relative insignificance, but also his infinite worth; one that acknowledges the good in life, but sees also the evil. And there are many variations in these attitudes.

The attitudes of people toward life are very important for the church. It stands for a distinctly Christian philosophy of life, and its leaders must help people to develop and live by such a philosophy. The Christian leader, therefore, must know how to deal with all types of people—for example, those who have lost faith in life, those who are unduly self-confident, those who are spiritually indifferent, those who are obsessed with the love of material things. Wrong views of life must be eliminated; right views must be established and encouraged.

*Assignment 3:* Select several different types of persons whom you know. Think of the attitude of each toward life, and of how this attitude affects the way he thinks and lives.

4. *A New Appreciation of Education and Larger Educational Accomplishment.* Our age has been described as being "education-minded." There is a widespread participation in educational activities. The average person is probably better informed today than at any previous time in history. His formal education is of longer duration and of better quality. His informal education—through reading, radio, travel, conference, and general experience—is more extensive. His interests are broader. His level of intelligence is higher.

These developments are important for the church. For one thing, they make it necessary for the church to improve its educational programs, standards, and methods. If the church does not do so, it must expect to be criticized by men who appreciate

the values of sound and thoroughgoing education. Further, these developments make it necessary for the church to meet people on their own intellectual level, and to present to them, in terms which they can grasp, a faith and a philosophy of life that are intellectually sound and tenable. Unless the church does this, it must expect gradually to lose the respect and confidence of the more intelligent of its members. To raise its standards and to satisfy thinking men, the church must provide a leadership which is both truly consecrated and thoroughly capable. Otherwise it can scarcely hope to hold and to guide men into faith and life. An educated constituency requires an educated leadership.

*Assignment 4:* Think of the members of your church class or group. Are you able to lead in such a way as to make Christian faith and life reasonable and appealing?

We have now seen how some of the more important changes in the modern world affect the people with whom we work. These changes require that we improve and make more effective our work as Christian leaders.

## The Place of Christian Leaders in the Changing World

Christian leaders have a very important place in our changing world. The church has a real and vital contribution to make. It has a definite and helpful message. In these perplexing times the church's message and ministry are greatly needed. Think of two reasons why this is true.

In the first place, people are in desperate need of the spiritual and moral power which Christianity can give. Leaders in many walks of life are asserting that our civilization is in grave danger because of a lack of sound character and high moral idealism. A prominent British scientist recently said that mankind is ethically unprepared to live in this twentieth-century world. Statesmen, educators, and industrial leaders have made similar statements emphasizing the basic importance of good character in all phases of life. Various efforts are now being made to build character and moral fiber into the lives of the growing generation—through character education programs in the public schools, through such agencies as the Scouts and the Christian Associa-

tions, through study courses and general literature, and through moral reforms. Such efforts are praiseworthy and should receive the encouragement of Christian leaders. But, the noblest character and idealism are inspired, empowered, and nurtured not by mere character education, but by vital Christian faith. The real need of people today, therefore, is faith in Jesus Christ—strong, enduring, intelligent faith. In Christ, people will find not only personification of the noblest character and idealism, but also power to realize that character and to practice that idealism. People need power as well as knowledge. Such power is available through faith in Jesus Christ. This is the power which the Christian Church proclaims and offers to men. This is one of the great contributions which the church can make to our day.

In the second place, people need the stabilizing influence of Christianity if they are to live successfully in a changing world. When men are confused and perplexed, when the faith of their fathers is questioned, when enthusiasm for the new and absorption in the present make them forget the values of the past, when the future beckons without hope, then, more than at any other time, they need the stabilizing influence of a faith founded on eternal truth. For such times, Christianity has a faith and a philosophy which are adequate. The Christian religion has weathered the storms of many changes. For nineteen centuries the Christian Church has ministered to men in the face of countless new developments. In the midst of constant change, it has proclaimed its belief in the eternal things of the spirit; it has made known an eternal and loving God who cares for every man; it has recognized the good in the new, but it has refused to give up the good in the old; it has ever sought a new kingdom and a new earth, but it has ever preserved the highest hopes and ideals of the past as a means of reaching this goal; in its scriptures, moral codes, creeds, and rituals, it has provided comfort, strength, guidance, and inspiration for man in all his life situations; it has proclaimed a Christ who is "the same yesterday, today, and for ever"—"a changeless Christ for a changing world"; it has applied the teachings of this Christ with new meaning to the needs and problems of every generation. Such has been the stabilizing influence of the Christian religion. This is another of the great contributions which the church can make to our day.

It is the supreme privilege and the primary responsibility of Christian leaders to help people know and experience the saving, uplifting, and stabilizing power of faith in Jesus Christ. The Christian Church is the guardian of this faith; Christian leaders are stewards of this faith. To the perpetuation and propagation of this faith and to the improvement of the church's ministry to the world, all Christian leaders are called. In this work, every leader in the church—from janitor to pastor, and from pastor to chief executive of the organized church—has a specific and indispensable part to play. Every leadership position in the church, therefore, is an opportunity for Christian service. With what appeal and possibility of spiritual adventure this opportunity comes in our day! How thankful Christian leaders should be that they are living in a time like the present! How eagerly they should prepare themselves for a more effective discharge of their responsibilities!

"To be alive in such an age!  
To live to it! To give to it!

.....

Fling forth thy sorrow to the wind  
And link thy life with humankind;  
Breathe the world thought, do the world deed,  
Think hugely of thy brother's need,  
And what thy woe, and what thy weal!  
Look to the work the times reveal!  
Give thanks with all thy flaming heart,  
Crave but to have in it a part.  
Give thanks and clasp thy heritage—  
To be alive in such an age!"<sup>(1)</sup>

In the days that lie ahead, only the best possible leadership will be good enough for the church. If the church is to perform its unique task in our changing world, its leaders must rise to new levels of consecration and effectiveness. They must become more fruitful in producing Christlike living in their followers. They must do their best with what knowledge and skills they now have, and they must endeavor to improve their knowledge and to develop their skills. Our day calls for leaders who thor-

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<sup>(1)</sup> Angela Morgan, *Selected Poems*, p. 270. Used by permission of Dodd, Mead, and Co.

oughly understand their task, who are possessed by the love of Jesus Christ, who are fully dedicated to his purpose, and who skillfully carry out their responsibilities. This fact should stimulate every leader to further study, to greater effort, and to more complete dedication. To be alive in such an age! To be in the service of Christ and his church in such an age! The privilege and the opportunity of it! The joy and the adventure of it!

### Summary

We are living in a world whose rapid changes affect the lives of people in many ways. To these people the church has a unique contribution to make; it must help them to a vital religious faith. The church makes this contribution largely through its leadership. The church, therefore, needs the best possible leaders that can be produced—leaders who are consecrated, informed, skilled, and Christlike. Christian leaders everywhere must improve their leadership.

### Questions for Discussion and Review

1. What are some of the outstanding changes which you have witnessed in your lifetime? In what ways have these changes affected your thinking and conduct?
2. Which of the changes mentioned in this chapter have affected your life? The life of the members of your church? The life of the people in your community?
3. What special difficulties have you experienced in your church work in recent years? Can any of these be traced to the changes mentioned in this chapter?
4. What is the distinctive contribution of the church in a changing world?
5. What have you done during the past two years to improve your ability to do church work?

### Suggestions for Further Study

#### *The Changing Family*

Read G. W. Fiske's *The Changing Family*, Ch. 1. (If you are a parent, read J. H. Montgomery's *Christian Parenthood in a Changing World*, Ch. 1.)



*Our Changing Education*

Read L. C. Palmer's *The New Religious Education*, Ch. 2 or Ch. 3.

*The Place of Religion in a Changing World*

Read A. H. Silver's *Religion in a Changing World*, Ch. 1.

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## CHAPTER V

# THE LEADER'S PHYSICAL AND MENTAL QUALIFICATIONS

In our study thus far, we have seen that the Christian leader must be in spiritual fellowship with Christ, must be a consecrated and active member of the church, must know the nature and purpose of the work in which he is engaged, and must be acquainted with the thought and life of the world in which he is doing his work. All this is groundwork. Without it, effective Christian leadership is impossible.

There are still other qualifications which every church worker should have—general and specific qualifications which can contribute much to his effectiveness. From this point forward we shall focus our attention upon some of the outstanding of these, with a view to seeing how Christian leaders can improve in themselves these necessary qualities. We shall begin with a discussion of a few general physical and mental qualifications.

### General Physical Qualifications of Christian Leaders

No one who knows anything about leadership effectiveness will deny that there are certain physical qualities which are distinct assets—for example, good health, adequate energy, and attractive personal appearance. True, there have been leaders who have accomplished wonders without these; but it is also true that they might have accomplished even more and greater things, had they possessed them. The fact that they were able to make large contributions to life in spite of their physical handicaps is no proof that physical health and strength and attractiveness are not very definite assets in leadership. It may be said, then, without fear of contradiction, that there are certain physical qualities which are highly desirable in leaders, including leaders in the church. Let us concentrate our thought upon the more important of these.

1. *Good Health.* The importance of good health is universally recognized. We all know that health promotes efficiency, and that lack of it tends to make for inefficiency; that physical fitness

gives power, and that unfitness often interferes with one's ability; that the proper functioning of the bodily organism is conducive to a wholesome disposition, and that illness, nervousness, and fatigue often give rise to attitudes which are not wholesome.

Good health, therefore, should be a personal ideal of every Christian leader. Those who possess it may consider themselves blessed, and should do everything within their power to maintain it; those who do not have it should conscientiously do whatever is humanly possible to attain it. This is not a trivial matter; indeed it is of very large significance. If the church worker wants to render the greatest possible service and to render this service in the most effective way, he must give thought to this matter of personal health.

Many of the laws of physical well-being are now generally known and understood. They have been discovered by diligent research and have been popularized through schools, journals, radio talks, and other agencies. The average person now knows the value of proper clothing, wholesome food, balanced diet, fresh air, moderate exercise, sufficient sleep, and physical cleanliness. He knows, too, the necessity of consulting a competent physician when health is threatened or undermined. It will not be necessary here to discuss the care of health. It will be sufficient to emphasize the fact that health plays a large part in the Christian leader's effectiveness, and that, consequently, he must, in the interest of his work, give it the consideration which it deserves.

*Assignment 1:* Think of your own health. Is it what it ought to be? Is it as good as you can make it? Do you carefully observe the laws of health?

**2. Adequate Energy.** Closely related to the matter of health is that of physical and nervous energy. It requires no unusual study of life to discover that an abundance of energy goes a long way toward making men's work joyous and efficient. Contrast the business man who is brimful of vitality with his fellow who is worn and weary, the laborer who goes to his task with vigor with one who has dissipated his strength, the housewife who has learned to conserve her energy with one who wastes it in "high living"; and note the differences in their work. Tired, worn,

exhausted bodies and frayed, ragged, energyless nerves are not conducive to the accomplishment of great tasks and of worthwhile service. Workers in any sphere of life need a supply of energy adequate to the vigorous prosecution of their tasks.

What is true of workers in general, is true also of workers in the church. If they are to do their God-given work with that enthusiasm and vitality which this work demands, it is essential that they bring to their task all the energy which they can possibly muster. This fact deserves to be stressed, particularly in view of the fact that most church workers are volunteer, part-time workers, who have already used up much of their energy upon their everyday work in the world. This work naturally receives the main share of their strength, and this is as it should be. Nevertheless, it is essential that even volunteer workers should come to their church work with an adequate supply of energy; it is not fair to the work to come to it with insufficient power to make it fruitful.

What can Christian leaders do to store up and conserve adequate energy for the work which they have volunteered to do in and through the church? This would seem to be a perfectly fair question to ask. It needs to be answered. A few suggestions are given here: In the first place, the Christian leader can guard his general health; this has already been treated and requires no further discussion at this point. In the second place, he can religiously avoid all forms of dissipation. Excessive recreation, exhausting pleasures, over-long hours, and intemperate living generally, all tend to deprive one of that energy which is so much needed in the service of the church. The increasing tendency to use Saturday, especially Saturday evening and night, for pleasure requires special consideration. No Christian leader can afford to appear before his church group in a tired condition due to lack of rest. Children and young people are very sensitive to the attitudes and actions of their leaders; their own attitudes and actions are definitely influenced by those of their elders. Often cases of nervousness, inattentiveness, and misconduct may be traced to nervous conditions and disquieting attitudes in parents and leaders. In the third place, the Christian leader can refuse to undertake more church work than he can do well. In almost every congregation there are a few folk who are willing beyond their strength. Because of their willingness they are

often over-loaded with numerous responsibilities. Not infrequently they overload themselves. Consequently their energies are often scattered over so many projects and activities that they cannot bring to any one the concentration of power which they ought to give to it, and thus their work tends to become inefficient and ineffective. Christian leaders will do well to undertake a few tasks, and to concentrate all their strength and energy upon these. In the end they will be rendering their church a more helpful service.

The Christian leader, then, is under obligation to conserve all the energy he possibly can, in order that he may bring to his work the very best of which he is capable.

*Assignment 2:* Do you endeavor to bring to your church work all the physical and nervous energy you possibly can? If not, what can you do to improve yourself in this respect?

3. *Attractive Personal Appearance.* That personal appearance plays a large part in a person's influence upon others requires no demonstration. To no little extent, first impressions are made by outward appearance, and these first impressions have a way of coloring later impressions. Who has not seen a child drawing away from a well-meaning person simply because that person's appearance was strange or repelling? Who has not attended a lecture that was completely spoiled by the outward appearance and manner of the lecturer? Young folks usually pay considerable attention to their appearance, for they know that it plays an important part in attracting attention and in "making a hit" with others. A person's outward attractiveness has much to do with his securing a new position, with his being accepted in certain social groups, with his ease in forming friendships, and with many other things. We may conclude that physical appearance is of considerable significance.

Is this true also of the Christian leader? Does it matter how he looks, how he carries himself, how he dresses? The answer is yes. The leader's appearance may attract or repel; it may help to create confidence, or it may make it impossible for confidence to develop; it may tend to confirm what the leader says, or it may negate his teaching; it may give evidence of the

indwelling of the Spirit of God, or it may reveal the lack of this Spirit. How important, then, the posture, the facial expression, and even the dress of Christian leaders! These things will not be overlooked by those leaders who desire to make the very most of their Christian ministry.

Attractive personal appearance depends upon a great many different factors: thoughts, attitudes, health, posture, cleanliness, neatness, clothing, and others. The leader who would develop and retain personal attractiveness must think pure thoughts, be Christlike in attitude, endeavor to keep himself in the best of health, develop good postures, dress neatly, avoid artificiality, and be sincere and natural in the presence of others.

*Assignment 3:* Do you give sufficient attention to the outward expression of your own Christian personality?

All these physical qualities which we have discussed—health, energy, attractiveness—have a contribution to make to leadership effectiveness, and that contribution is by no means a small one. Every leader who is endeavoring to improve himself should, therefore, “think on these things” and try to develop them to the best of his ability.

### General Mental Qualifications of Christian Leaders

Important as are the general physical qualities of leaders, their mental qualities are of even greater importance. This is particularly true of leaders whose task is by nature educational. It is, therefore, true of the large majority of Christian leaders in the church; for, directly or indirectly, most of them are engaged in work which has an educational significance.

What are some of the mental qualifications of Christian leaders? We shall consider six of them: (1) mental health; (2) intelligence; (3) a will to learn; (4) imagination; (5) initiative; and (6) self-control. Each of these deserves very careful study.

1. *Mental Health.* Mental health is the normal condition of the mind. It is closely related to physical health and, like it, is a condition which is of the utmost importance in effective leadership; indeed, it is practically indispensable. The sciences of psychology and mental hygiene have revealed some of the out-

standing characteristics of mental health: ability to give attention to the matter in hand; orderly association of ideas and ability to think clearly; a wholesome interest in life; an active attitude in the face of difficulties and an eagerness to do something about them; control over feelings and impulses; a sense of dependence upon God; self-confidence; a feeling of confidence toward other persons and toward the universe; frankness in facing the truth; ability to adjust oneself to the ordinary situations of life and to new situations.

Each of these, it will be seen, is of basic importance in almost any field of church work. The Christian leader who wants to do effective work must necessarily be able to focus his attention upon what he is doing; must be able to think clearly in order that he may guide aright the thinking of others; must be able to face difficulties calmly and fearlessly; must be able to make adjustments to meet ever new and often unexpected situations; must have confidence in God, in himself, in the members of his group. In brief, he must endeavor to maintain his mental health.

How can he do this? The question is more easily asked than answered: for the laws of mental hygiene are not so simple as are those of physical hygiene. Nevertheless, a few suggestions can be given: In the first place, he can be careful of his physical health; for, as has been said, mental health and physical health are interrelated. The maintenance of a sound body contributes much to the development of a sound mind. In the second place, he can live on a high spiritual and moral plane, for nothing else is so conducive to mental well-being as are Christian faith and righteousness. In the third place, he can endeavor to banish from his mind such attitudes as fear, hate, and worry, which, if permitted to continue, always undermine its strength. In the elimination of fear, hate, and worry, Christian faith is a mighty factor. And, in the fourth place, he can unify his whole life around some great, central purpose. It is the unified and integrated life which possesses mental health, especially when the integration is upon the basis of some controlling spiritual goal. For example, consecration to Jesus Christ furnishes such a purpose; the advancement of his kingdom provides such a goal.

2. *Intelligence.* Intelligence is the capacity and ability to use one's physical and mental equipment purposefully. Without it, thought and learning are impossible; and, to the extent that it

is lacking, thought and learning are definitely limited. There are at least four essential elements in intelligence: the desire to investigate, the ability to perceive relationships, the ability to remember, and the ability to persevere toward definite goals. Where one or more of these are wanting, there can be no intelligent living. Now, what does intelligence do for a person? For one thing, it makes possible the acquisition of knowledge and insights, without which, of course, purposeful living would be impossible. Again, it makes possible the deduction of principles and the application of these principles to particular situations—a very necessary part of purposeful living. Further, it makes possible the adaptation of programs, means, and methods to ever new situations; and this is essential if one's work is to have meaning. Then, too, it makes possible the tactful guidance of people, which is by no means an unimportant thing in life. And, finally, it makes possible the development of character, ideals, purposes, and skill.

All these, it is evident, are essential in Christian leadership. The Christian worker must be able to understand things, to think things through to a conclusion, to arrive at principles, to apply these to life, to make modifications as situations may require, to deal wisely with people, and so forth. Therefore he needs intelligence. It takes study, effort, patience, perseverance, and self-discipline to develop intelligence; but it can be done. The possibility of doing it should be a challenge to every church worker to develop his God-given mental ability to its fullest possible extent. Other factors being equal, the Christian worker who brings to his task a keen mind will be a more effective leader than the one who does not.

3. *A Will to Learn.* Mental health and general intelligence will be of little value to a person who does not have a will to learn. Of course, there is mental growth even where there is no conscious effort to learn; but the greatest mental achievements are undoubtedly the result of persevering effort behind which there is a will—that is, a whole personality intent upon developing itself. In every walk of life, those persons usually get farthest who are intent upon getting there and who are willing to pay the price to carry on until they have arrived.

This is undoubtedly true in the case of leaders in the church. The pastor, the superintendent, the teacher who has a will to



learn is most likely to be ultimately successful; and the same holds for any other leader in the church, or out of it. It was pointed out in Chapter I that we are living in a changing world, in a world of rapidly expanding knowledge, in a world where the average man is probably better informed than ever before in history. All this makes it necessary for the Christian leader to keep pace with the thought world in which men are living and to bring his Christian truth to bear upon this world. Therefore, the Christian leader must have a will to learn. This "will to learn" is most exacting in its demands; but it is essential and highly rewarding, as all those who "seek wisdom and pursue it" can testify.

*Assignment 4:* Test the strength of your own will to learn by asking yourself these questions: Do I have a genuine desire to learn? Do I devote time to reading, study, observation, and practice? Do I persevere in my quest for a definite piece of knowledge until I have acquired it? Do I persevere in the development of a specific skill until I have mastered it?

4. *Imagination.* Imagination is the mental power or process by which we see, with the mind's eye, objects, situations, and meanings beyond the limits of physical vision and immediate experience. By it we perceive absent and remote objects, recall the past, and anticipate the future.

Imagination plays a very important role in religious leadership. The intelligent church leader uses it when, during his preparation, he visualizes his group and their needs; he uses it when he tries to enter sympathetically into the lives of his followers; he uses it when he determines his leadership goals; he uses it when he encounters difficulties, for only through its use can he see various possible solutions and evaluate them. Imagination has a very important place in almost every step of the Christian leader's work. It is essential in story-telling, in discussions, in the assignment of tasks, in the conduct of projects, in the planning of worship, and in innumerable other phases of the leader's work. It contributes to creativity; it encourages initiative; it makes for vitality. It is a power which can be devel-

oped, and in the use of which leaders can become skillful. Imagination, it is true, may be misused and may mislead; but, when kept under control, it is an indispensable part of the leader's mental equipment.

5. *Initiative.* Initiative is the power to work out for oneself some new objective, to think out for oneself the best way to reach a goal, to pioneer in the performance of some new undertaking, or to do all these. Leaders, by the very nature of their task, must have this ability. They must be self-starters. They must do independent thinking and be able to lead in all those activities which make up their work. Initiative depends on knowledge, imagination, a sense of responsibility, self-confidence, and purpose. It grows out of a proper attitude toward oneself and one's task. A genuine sense of responsibility for one's task, a wholesome self-confidence, and a knowledge of good methods helps to develop this ability. Initiative can be developed; it grows with self-directed experience.

6. *Self-Control.* The Christian leader may have mental health, intelligence, a will to learn, imagination, and initiative, and yet lack one mental quality which is very necessary: self-control. This is the ability to regulate by himself the physical and mental powers which he possesses. Every Christian leader needs to develop this ability; for without it all his other powers may be misdirected and misused, but with it all these powers will be kept under constant personal supervision so that they will contribute to a purposeful and fruitful life.

*Assignment 5:* Think of some of the attitudes and actions of adults which show lack of self-control—displays of anger, hatred, jealousy, or pettishness. Have you ever seen such attitudes and actions in church workers? What was their effect on the members of the group? Upon the leader himself?

The general physical and mental qualities which have been discussed in this chapter are basic qualifications for Christian leadership. An ideal leader would certainly have all of them. To the extent that we do not have them, we have failed to measure up to the ideal, and to this same extent we have need of im-

provement. Improving our leadership, then, involves endeavoring to discover in how far we are deficient in these qualities and endeavoring to overcome these deficiencies.

### Summary

There are certain qualities which every Christian leader should have in order to carry on his work as effectively as possible. Among these are three physical qualities—good health, an adequate supply of physical and nervous energy, and an attractive personal appearance—and six mental qualities—mental health, intelligence, a will to learn, imagination, initiative, and self-control. These are all basic to acquiring and developing the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and purposes needed by the Christian leader. To the extent that a leader does not have these characteristics and qualities, they are his fundamental needs. If he is to improve himself, the first thing he must do is to discover in which of these he is deficient. Then he must deliberately and conscientiously set out to improve himself along those lines where he has noticed his own short-comings. Only so can he become a truly effective leader.

### Questions for Discussion and Review

1. What are some of the general physical and mental qualities which every Christian leader should have?
2. Why is the leader's physical health a matter of importance?
3. What are some things a church worker can do to guarantee an adequate supply of energy to carry on his church work?
4. In what ways does a leader's personal appearance affect his work?
5. What is the importance of mental health in leadership effectiveness? How can mental health be maintained?
6. What is intelligence? Why is it indispensable in Christian work? What can be done to improve one's intelligence?
7. What is the significance of "a will to learn" in a leader?
8. Why do Christian leaders need to have imagination? Initiative? Self-control?
9. Do you agree that these qualities which have been discussed are essential or highly desirable qualifications for leadership in the church? Give reasons for your answer.

### Suggestions for Further Study

#### *What Is Involved in Being a Consecrated Leader*

Read Chs. 1 and 9 in A. J. Traver's *Consecrated Leadership*, noting (1) the importance of the object of one's consecration, and (2) the qualities of personality which make for consecration.

#### *The Laws of Mental Health*

Read Ch. 20 in W. H. Burnham's *The Normal Mind*, noting especially pp. 671, 672.

#### *The Place of Imagination in Life and Religion*

Read Chs. 6 and 7 in Lindsay Dewar's *Imagination and Religion*, which show the place of imagination in worship and teaching.

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## CHAPTER VI

### THE LEADER'S KNOWLEDGE AND INSIGHT

When Solomon became king of Israel, great responsibilities rested upon him. He inherited the leadership of a great and growing nation, destined to face many difficulties in its internal development and in its relations with neighboring nations. His task required wisdom, courage, and skill. So, most appropriately, one of his first acts was to worship God and ask for his mercy and guidance. After the service of worship, as the king, thinking no doubt of his own qualifications for his task, communed with God, God said, "Ask what I shall give thee." It was then that Solomon offered that great and classic prayer: "Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge [lead] this thy people, that is so great?" In this prayer, Solomon recognized his own need of two very important leadership necessities: *knowledge* and *insight*.

The fundamental needs of leaders in all ages are basically the same: health of body and mind, knowledge and insight, right attitudes, fine skills, and worthy life purposes. Thus far in this text, we have considered the leader's need of certain physical and mental qualities which make for health of body and mind. In this chapter, we shall focus attention upon the leader's need of knowledge and insight. We shall: (1) seek a better understanding of what we mean by knowledge and insight; (2) think of their importance in daily life and in the development of leadership skill; (3) consider the specific bodies of knowledge needed by Christian leaders; and (4) note how leaders may increase their knowledge and insight.

#### The Meaning of "Knowledge" and "Insight"

"Knowledge" and "insight" are not synonymous. It is important to distinguish between them. "Knowledge" may be defined as *acquaintance with facts*—consciousness of anything that exists. "Insight" may be defined as *understanding of facts*—penetration into their meaning and appreciation of their value.

Knowledge precedes and is a requisite of insight; true insight partly depends on the possession of adequate and accurate knowledge.

### The Importance of Knowledge and Insight

Knowledge and insight play an important role in life and leadership.

1. *Knowledge and Insight, the Bases of Further Mental Activity.* Both knowledge and insight are essential to further mental activity. Knowledge is essential because it furnishes the raw material with which we think. Every moment of consciousness involves the use of some portion of the knowledge we have acquired. Further, as has been pointed out, knowledge is basic to the development of insight. As the mind acquires new knowledge and relates it in an orderly and meaningful way to knowledge already possessed, each bit of knowledge is seen in its proper relationship, and insight is the result. Insight, therefore, is the product of properly relating various bodies of knowledge. It, too, is essential to further mental life and activity. It aids in acquiring new knowledge, in relating new knowledge to old, and in determining the use of knowledge for the tasks of life. Solomon was right when he said, "Wisdom [insight] is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy knowledge get understanding" (Prov. 4: 7).

2. *Knowledge and Insight, Essentials for Growth in Personality.* Knowledge and insight are basic elements of personality, because they are essential for the existence and proper development of all its other elements: (1) They are basic to *physical and mental health*, because health of body and mind depend, in part, upon knowledge and understanding of the laws of health. (2) They are basic to *right attitudes*, because there must be knowledge of a thing before there can be any attitude toward it, and there must be understanding and proper evaluation of it before there can be a right attitude. (3) They are basic to the development of *skills*, because skills involve knowing what needs to be done and how to do it effectively. (4) They are basic to the development of *life purposes*. Purposes are goals consciously chosen from among a number of possible goals. Without knowledge there can be no purpose; and without understanding of the

relative merits of various possible goals, high and worthy purposes cannot be chosen. We see, therefore, that every aspect of personality depends upon, and has its development affected by, knowledge and insight.

3. *Knowledge and Insight, Essentials of Effective Christian Leadership.* Knowledge and insight are essential for effective leadership in any enterprise. Effective leadership is a complex skill. It involves many specific skills, such as: skill in maintaining physical and mental health, skill in thinking, skill in working with and influencing others, skill in planning and preparing specific tasks, and skill in performing these tasks. None of these necessary skills can be properly developed without knowledge of, and insight into, all the factors involved and the right use of these factors in achieving the ends desired.

The place of knowledge and insight in religious leadership has frequently been minimized, especially in regard to lay leaders in congregations; but they are just as important here as in any other area of life. Jesus once said to his disciples, whom he was preparing for leadership in the church, "Can the blind lead the blind? Shall not they both fall into the ditch?" He was, of course, speaking of mental and spiritual blindness. A blind person is scarcely a dependable guide. A dependable leader must know the road and be able to lead others in it. He must have greater vision than his fellows—vision born of knowledge and insight. God's warning to the church's leadership of Hosea's time should be heeded today: "Because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee" (*Hos. 4: 6*). God rejects leaders who disqualify themselves by refusing knowledge. Only wise and informed leaders can be fruitful for God's purposes.

### What Knowledge Is Needed

If knowledge and insight are so essential for the Christian leader, on just what points should he focus his study? The answer depends upon the nature of his task. He must know and have insight into those things which are necessary to the satisfactory performance of his work. In general, the following would seem to be of importance to any Christian leader: knowledge of, and insight into, (1) the Christian religion, (2) the Bible, (3) the Christian Church, (4) people, (5) the world, (6) leadership,

and (7) himself. These bodies of knowledge are interrelated and, to some extent, overlap. Taken as a whole, they include all the knowledge needed by a leader in the church. We shall now consider each of these bodies of knowledge and think of their place in successful Christian leadership.

1. *Knowledge of the Christian Religion.* An understanding of the Christian religion is absolutely essential, for it is this religion to which the leader is seeking to win others, and in which he is seeking to develop them. Precisely what does the church leader need to know about Christianity?

In the first place, he needs to know its *general nature*. He should know, for instance, that Christianity is the divinely revealed religion of salvation through Jesus Christ; that it is concerned primarily with man's relation to God and to his fellow-man; that it embraces also all man's other relationships; that it affects, vitalizes, and transforms the entire personality; and that it is the most comprehensive and powerful religion in the world.

In the second place, he needs to know and understand its *origin and history*. He should know how it began, how it spread, what changes took place in it, and why it is as it is today. He should understand God's part in its development, and also the part which has been played by men.

In the third place, he needs to understand its *basic principles and teachings*, especially the teachings of Jesus Christ. He needs to know the message of Christianity and what this message means for personal and social life today.

All such knowledge has distinct value for the leader: it helps him to have a deeper understanding and experience of Christian faith in his own life; it increases his faith in the power and value of Christianity; and it gives him a vital message. The more the leader knows of Christianity and the deeper his insight into it, the more effective will be his witness to Christ and his work in Christ's cause.

*Assignment 1:* Think of your own knowledge and understanding of Christianity. Can you set forth and interpret the Christian religion to the members of your church group and to people outside the church, in such a way that it will be clear and intelligible to them?



2. *Knowledge of the Bible.* The Bible is the chief source book and the basic authority for the truth and the teachings of Christianity. There are two types of knowledge which the Christian leader needs in regard to it.

In the first place, it will be helpful to have knowledge *about the Bible*. Certain general information *about* the Bible is essential for a true understanding and appreciation of the Bible. Therefore the leader needs to know something of the general nature and purpose of the Bible, its origin and history, its organization and structure, its power and value, its place in the life of the church, its principles of interpretation, and its proper use in personal growth and in leadership activities.

In the second place, the leader needs knowledge *of the Bible*. By this is meant such things as the general content of the various books, their basic facts and teachings, the distinctive messages of the Old and of the New Testaments, the life and teachings of Jesus, the origin and development of the early church, and the great central message of the whole Bible: salvation through Christ.

Such a twofold knowledge of the Bible will help the leader to understand the historical background and basis of Christianity; it will provide him with basic materials for all forms of Christian work; it will increase his spiritual insight and faith; it will guide him in living the Christian life; and it will inspire and help him in winning others to faith in Christ. No person is really qualified to teach or lead in the Christian Church who does not have a working knowledge and a fair understanding of the Bible.

*Assignment 2:* Think of how much you actually know and understand of the content and message of the Bible. Do you know enough about it to read it intelligently and to use it effectively in your church work?

3. *Knowledge of the Christian Church.* The Christian Church is the divinely established agency for perpetuating the truth and the power of the Christian religion. It is the agency in and through which the Christian leader finds help for living the Christian life, carries on his work, and seeks to realize his highest goals. The very life and progress of the church depends, humanly speaking, upon members and leaders who know and

understand it. What should a leader know about his church?

For one thing, he should know *his own congregation*: its purpose, its organization, its work, its administration, its methods, its needs and difficulties, and its auxiliary organizations, especially those with which the leader is affiliated. Such knowledge helps the leader to see his own organizations and activities in their relationship to the entire program of the congregation; it also helps him to be more effective in maintaining and improving the entire program.

Then again, he should know *the general church body to which his congregation belongs*. This larger church organization is the medium through which his congregation helps to support a world-wide missionary, educational, and service program. It is important, therefore, that leaders in congregations know the district, national, and even international agencies and institutions which their congregation helps to empower and support. Moreover, many of these agencies and institutions exist to serve and strengthen the program and life of the congregation, and to them the congregation looks for help and supervision. Every church leader, therefore, should know something of the origin, history, distinctive teachings, purposes, organization, program, and needs of his own denomination.

Further, he should know *something of the church outside his own denomination*. The church extends far beyond the limits of any one denomination. There are many different denominations or church bodies. To some extent they are related to each other, and they co-operate in many ways; all, for example, have the task of winning people to faith in Christ. The church leader, therefore, should know something of the purpose, history, relationships, and needs of the church as a whole. Such knowledge will help him understand, appreciate, and serve his own denomination more effectively; and it will help in his personal relationships with leaders and members of other church bodies, especially in his own community.

**Assignment 3:** Think of what the term "church" means to you. Does it include the total organization and program of your congregation, your denomination, and all the church bodies of the world? How much do you know about the larger aspects of the church?

**4. Knowledge of People.** The task of the Christian leader involves working with people: winning them to faith in Christ, teaching them, serving them, transforming their lives, leading them to build and extend the church and to improve society. He must, therefore, know people—their characteristics, their needs, their interests, how they learn, how to win and hold their interest, how to help them. The church leader must understand human nature in general, and the group with which he is working, in particular. For some leaders this means knowing children, young people, or adults; for others it means knowing boys or girls, men or women; for still others it means knowing students, or parents, or leaders, or the sick. Knowledge of people, especially of the people in his own church group, helps the leader to be more effective in selecting program objectives, materials, and methods; in applying truth to individual lives; in meeting the needs of specific groups and individuals; in maintaining harmonious relationships; and in understanding himself.

**Assignment 4:** Think of the members of the specific church group with which you are working. Do you know their general characteristics, needs, interests, capacities, and problems?

**5. Knowledge of the World.** As was pointed out in Chapter IV, the environment in which people live affects their lives in many ways. Some environmental forces help and encourage people to live the Christian life; others hinder and discourage such living. This means that what goes on in the home, the school, the place of business, the community, and the world, should be of concern to the church leader. He must seek an understanding of the environment in which the members of his church group live; he must know what influences are shaping their lives; he must try to discover those situations in their environment which ought to be changed and those forces which need to be counteracted; he must be able to speak in terms of the experiences of the members of his group and to relate religious truth to the actual issues they face in daily life; he must then inspire them to be Christian in every situation. Christian leaders cannot do this if they ignore the forces and conditions in their own community which hinder the development of Christlike personality.

The dangers of remaining ignorant on these points are obvious. If the Christian leader remains ignorant of the outward life of his group, he is likely to interpret the Christian religion as something unrelated to, and unconcerned with, existing conditions; to appear to be indifferent to the issues and difficulties which are of vital importance to the members of his group; to acquire a superficial optimism about the progress of Christianity and of the church; to stand sponsor for a program which has little to challenge people to courageous and constructive action; and to give the impression that Christianity is satisfied with things as they are. All these are contrary to the very nature of our religion, for Christianity is a transforming and revolutionizing power, both in individuals and in society. The leader should, therefore, make every effort to know the world's thought and life, in order that he may be able to bring his message to bear definitely upon them.

*Assignment 5:* Make a list of a few conditions in your community which make it difficult for members of your church group to live the Christian life.

6. *Knowledge of the Nature and Meaning of Leadership.* If the Christian leader is to have the proper attitude toward himself and his work, he must know what Christian leadership means and what it involves. Such an understanding cannot be secured merely by a study of leadership and leadership principles in the abstract. It can be secured only as each leader studies his specific task in the light of the general principles of Christian leadership.

7. *Knowledge of Oneself.* The importance of the leader's knowing himself—his general characteristics, his capacities, his interests, his needs—has already been emphasized. It is sufficient here to state once more that self-knowledge is of fundamental significance for every Christian leader.

### How to Increase Knowledge and Insight

How can Christian leaders acquire the knowledge and insight they need? The more important ways will be treated in Chapters X-XII. It will serve our present purpose merely to set down a few practical suggestions:

1. *Make the acquisition of knowledge and the development of understanding a basic life purpose.* Recognize understanding as a supreme value of life. Dedicate yourself to its pursuit. It will help you to be an effective leader in the church.

2. *Ask God to give you wisdom and to guide you in your search for it.* God is the source of all wisdom. He can enlighten the mind. Every Christian ought to pray often for divine enlightenment.

3. *Study the Bible.* The Bible is the greatest source book of true wisdom that man has at his disposal. Study it regularly, thoughtfully, thoroughly, prayerfully.

4. *Read and study the best available literature on the subjects you need to know as a leader.* Use books and periodicals which have been prepared specifically for Christian leaders. In such literature, you can secure, in compact form and with the minimum of time and effort, much of the knowledge you need.

5. *Participate with an eager and open mind in services of worship.* Not all knowledge and insight is gained through study. Deep and precious truths—for example, that God is present, that sin is forgiven, that there is a bond of union between all believers—often come in moments of worship, when the mind is open and ready for divine revelation.

6. *Participate in fellowship with others.* Much that is of value can be learned from conversation and from fellowship with others. Sharing with others enriches both him who expresses himself and him who receives.

7. *Learn through practice and experience.* One of the most fruitful sources of knowledge and insight is everyday experience. All human experience has something to teach. The richer and more varied one's experiences, the greater ought to be his knowledge and insight. A Christian leader can learn much by recalling past experiences and interpreting them in the light of present knowledge, by testing out in life some idea or truth, by performing a task in the light of the best knowledge he has, and by serving others.

8. *Draw upon your general education for the knowledge and insight you need.* A person's general education certainly should make some valuable contributions to Christian living and Christian work. The wise leader will utilize anything he has learned

in school or college which will help him to render more effectively his service in the church.

*Assignment 6:* Select from the eight suggestions just made any which you can begin to use now. Make these a definite part of your program of self-improvement.

### Summary

Knowledge and insight are fundamental needs of all Christian leaders. They are highly important for developing leadership skill. Specifically, what every church leader needs is knowledge of, and insight into, the Christian religion, the Bible, the church, people, the world, leadership, and himself. To acquire this knowledge and to gain this insight, the leader should make use of every possible opportunity that is afforded him.

### Questions for Discussion and Review

1. What is meant by "knowledge"? By "insight"?
2. In what ways is knowledge important for daily life? For successful leadership in the church?
3. What are some of the dangers of having ignorant leaders in the church? In what sense is ignorance the enemy of personal and social progress?
4. What seven topics cover all the knowledge needed by a Christian leader? Can you think of anything a leader should know which can not be properly classified under one of these topics?
5. What kind of Bible knowledge is most important for the leader?
6. Why should a leader know about the organization and program of his congregation? About the organization and program of the church outside his own congregation?
7. Why should a leader know the people with whom he works and the environment in which they live?
8. What are some of the most effective ways of increasing one's knowledge and insight? Can you think of any ways not suggested in this chapter?

### Suggestions for Further Study

#### *The Teachings of the Bible on the Value and Importance of Knowledge*

Secure a good Bible concordance (Walker's, Cruden's) and look up the references under these subjects: Knowledge, Wisdom, Understanding, Truth. Write out the more important ideas you discover as to why and how knowledge and wisdom are of value to man.

#### *Types of Subject Matter in Current Leadership Courses*

Secure the most recent Bulletin of your denomination which describes the leadership training courses now available. Using the seven bodies of knowledge listed in this chapter as a basis, classify each course mentioned in the Bulletin under that heading to which it seems most closely related.

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## CHAPTER VII

### THE LEADER'S ATTITUDES

In a quaint old German settlement in eastern Pennsylvania, about 1750, a conversation something like the following took place between one of the older inhabitants and a newcomer, just arrived from his native Germany.

Inhabitant: "No, you won't find as many good schools over here as you had in the Fatherland, and on that account many children here on the frontier grow up just like trees."

Newcomer: "But surely the children need nothing more than a good education for the welfare of their souls."

Inhabitant: "True, but we have few good schoolmasters. I have known many schoolmasters, but few good ones have I seen. Yet, I remember two in my lifetime who had many good qualities. One of them spent much time in prayer that God would direct and keep his pupils. The other, out of his deep love for God, loved his pupils as if they were his own children. When he was obliged to punish them for misbehavior, he did so with sorrow and a wounded heart, so that his own love won his pupils to him."

Newcomer: "Such schoolmasters are few in number, 'tis true. I suppose that here in the woods, one must be satisfied if they only teach the children to read and to write."<sup>(1)</sup>

The two teachers whom the inhabitant remembered as being good teachers were remembered largely because of their fine Christian attitudes. It was these which stood out clearly as real leadership qualities. Let us, then, think of attitudes and their place in the life of Christian leaders.

### Attitudes

Fundamentally, an attitude is the position a person takes with reference to something, his feeling toward it, his point of view regarding it. Roughly, then, an attitude may be defined as a feeling toward a person, thing, idea, or situation. Faith in God, love for mankind, confidence in oneself, devotion to duty, disgust with

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<sup>(1)</sup> Adapted from C. L. Mauer, *Early Lutheran Education in Pennsylvania*, 1932, pp. 180, 181.



social conditions, despair in the face of danger, fear of the future—these, and countless other such feelings, are attitudes. Every person has some attitude toward everything which falls within the area of his consciousness. He may be totally indifferent toward a given object, but that very indifference is his attitude. An attitude may be temporary and change with changing situations and experiences, or it may be permanent and remain unchanged regardless of changing circumstances. It may be wholesome and contribute to worth-while ends, or it may be unwholesome and be destructive of that which is good. Whether temporary or permanent, wholesome or unwholesome, it is of significance.

There are many factors which contribute to the formation of attitudes: inherited traits and tendencies, one's general physiological condition, habits, education, general experience. Attitudes are usually very complex things, composed of impressions, ideas, thoughts, emotions, and many other elements. They are often expressive of a person's whole personality. It may be well, therefore, to consider the part they play in life, and particularly in the life of leaders.

### **The Place of Attitudes in Daily Life and in Leadership**

Attitudes play so large a role that it is impossible here to discuss them in detail. It will be sufficient for our general purpose to point out a few values which are of special significance for Christian leaders:

1. *Attitudes and Self-Improvement.* Attitudes have much to do with learning. A person who is not interested in learning, who feels he knows all that is worth knowing, who believes he does not have the capacity to learn, or who takes the attitude that all learning is drudgery, is not likely to make much progress. His attitude hinders his development. On the other hand, a person who is eager to learn, willing to persevere, and confident that he can succeed, is quite likely to attain his goal. His attitude helps his development. There are a number of these spiritual qualities which very definitely contribute to growth, and the lack of which just as definitely retards it. Among these are curiosity, open-mindedness, love of truth, loyalty to high ideals, dissatisfaction with present attainments, desire for success, and

willingness to persevere. All these contribute to that general mental characteristic described in Chapter V as "a will to learn."

It has already been pointed out that this "will to learn" is of tremendous importance in the life of Christian leaders. Without it, self-improvement is next to impossible; and self-improvement is obviously a highly desirable objective in the life of every leader in the church. Accordingly, Christian leaders must endeavor to develop these attitudes which are conducive to effective learning. Such an effort will help them. And it will help also those who follow them, for they will catch from their leaders the spirit of eager self-improvement.

2. *Attitudes and Character Development.* Closely related to this matter of self-improvement—indeed, a part of it—is the matter of character development. Character is the composite of all of a person's attitudes. Accordingly, the development of character requires the development of attitudes, and then their integration into a unified whole. Further, it follows that a person may at any time measure his growth in character by studying his various attitudes—toward God, the universe, the church, his fellowmen, himself, and so forth. In order to do so intelligently, he must, of course, have a standard of comparison, an ideal with which he may compare himself. For the Christian this standard of comparison is the character of God as revealed in Jesus Christ: "Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect." Godlikeness, Christlikeness, is the Christian's goal.

If Christlikeness is the Christian's goal, it is certainly the Christian leader's goal. Accordingly, every church worker should be concerned to build up within himself, by the power of God, a character which increasingly approaches the character of Jesus Christ, his Lord. But if he is to do this, he must try to perfect in himself those attitudes which are found in Jesus, for they constitute his standard of measurement and his ideal. The leader who does this will find God's Spirit fashioning within him an increasingly sanctified personality and a genuinely Christlike character.

**Assignment 1:** Make a list of the more important attitudes which you think a follower of Jesus Christ should have.

**3. Attitudes and Influence.** A person's attitudes have much to do with the influence which he is able to exert on others. A person who dislikes children can hardly expect to accomplish much with them. An employer who assumes an attitude of indifference to the welfare of his employees can hardly expect them to be devoted to him and his interests. A jingoist who cannot see any good beyond the borders of his own country can hardly expect to win people of other lands to a policy of peace and good will. And so it is all through life. The influence which men exert is undoubtedly determined in no little measure by their attitudes.

This fact has very decided significance for the Christian leader. If he is to influence others, he must first get their attention. He cannot do this if his own attitudes are repelling. When he has their attention, he must hold their interest, gain their confidence, win their approval, keep their respect. This is impossible if his own attitudes are not such as to arouse interest, confidence, approval, and respect. Finally, when he has won and held them, it must be his aim to help them develop attitudes of their own which are in harmony with the Christian ideal. How can he possibly accomplish this if his own attitudes are not in harmony with it? Experience shows that people's attitudes are quite generally molded by the attitudes of others, particularly by those of their leaders. How essential it is, then, that church workers develop in themselves those attitudes which they hope to develop in the lives of those with whom they are working!

### Some Basic Christian Attitudes

What, now, are the attitudes which Christian leaders should have? It has already been stated that Christlikeness is the general ideal. But the term "Christlikeness" is an exceedingly complex term, which, to be understood, needs to be broken up into its component ideas—into all the constituent elements which had a place in our Lord's life. Manifestly it is impossible to do this in any exhaustive way in a book such as this. A few of the outstanding examples of Christian attitudes may, however, be given:

**1. Faith.** Faith is sincere belief, confidence, trust, and dependence. Our Lord had such faith. He had it in his Father as is evident from his prayers, in himself as the One sent from God

to save the world, in men as potential children of God, in his disciples, in the coming of God's kingdom. Faith, then, is evidently an element of Christlikeness. Without it no one, no matter what his other qualities, can be said to be Christlike. It is absolutely essential.

It follows that faith is indispensable for Christian leaders. All outstanding leaders of the church—Paul, John, Augustine, Luther, Wesley, and hosts of others—and all other true Christian workers, whether great or small, have been characterized by faith. It must equally characterize leaders today. They simply cannot be Christian leaders unless they have it. Toward whom and toward what should the leader's faith attitude be directed?

First of all, *toward Christ himself*. It is universally accepted that faith in Jesus Christ is the vital heart of Christianity and of Christian life. It involves sincere belief in his divine Person, in his saving mission, in his atoning life and death, in his redeeming power, in his living presence, in his eternal Lordship, and in his value for man throughout all ages. It involves confidence in the revelation which he brought, in the truth which he taught, in the salvation which he achieved, in the victory which he won. It involves trust in his goodness and grace, in his love and justice, in his power and pardon. It involves dependence upon him for every spiritual gift.

From faith in Christ the Christian reaches out in faith *toward God*. He believes that Jesus was God incarnate; but further, upon the basis of Jesus' own teachings, he believes also in God the Father and in God the Holy Spirit, who, with Jesus, are the triune God. So the Christian directs his faith toward God; he believes in him, has confidence in him, trusts him, and depends upon him.

Faith in God leads to an attitude of faith *toward the Word of God*. The Christian, believing in Christ, knows that God has revealed himself. This revelation he finds pre-eminently in the unique revelation which has been made in Christ, but also, to a lesser degree, in the many revelations which have come through the experiences of inspired men of God preceding and following Christ. The record of this revelation he finds in the Bible. Accordingly, the Christian leader must have faith in the Bible as the authentic record of God's self-revelation, as the means whereby men are enlightened in divine truth, and as the depend-

able guide for faith and life. This involves belief in the truth of the Bible, confidence in its teaching, trust in its Gospel, and dependence upon it for spiritual life.

Out of faith in Christ, God, and the Word of God, grows faith *in the Christian Church*. On the basis of God's revelation, Christians believe in the church as the divinely established agency through which Christ's Gospel is transmitted to mankind. They believe in its purpose, teachings, program, and work. They have confidence in it, trust it, and depend upon it for the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments; for they have faith that God's Holy Spirit is in it, calling, gathering, enlightening, and sanctifying it, and preserving it in the true faith. Such faith in the church is particularly needed in Christian leaders, whose work is a part of the work of the church.

And then Christians have faith *toward themselves, toward others, and toward the world* in which they live. They realize, of course, that sin has been at work in themselves, in their fellowmen, and in the world; they know that faith such as they have in God and in Christ they cannot have in men; and yet they know also that they themselves are God's redeemed children, that all men are brothers for whom Christ died, and that the world is God's world. They can, and do, believe in the potential value of every human being and in the ultimate establishment of God's righteousness and rule in the world. Such faith is needed by every church worker. He must believe in himself as a child of God and as co-worker with God; he must believe in his fellowmen and have confidence that, under God, they may be transformed into Christlike persons; he must believe in this world of ours and in its ultimate transformation, by the power of God, into a righteous realm of Christ.

It is such an attitude of Christlike faith which leaders must develop if they are to be truly effective in their work in the church; they need, and need imperatively, a positive faith in Christ, in God, in the Word, in the church, in the world, in themselves, and in others. With faith of this kind, their work will become a joyous, thrilling, eternally worth-while service.

2. *Love*. Love is absolute devotion to the best interests of that toward which it is directed. It involves such elements as sympathetic understanding, deep appreciation, active good will, self-sacrifice, and dedicated service. Jesus manifested such love; his

whole life was marked by absolute devotion to the best interests of God and man. Love, accordingly, is a second constituent element in Christlikeness.

It follows that it is indispensable for Christian leaders. A complete treatment of its place in the leader's life and work would require a consideration, as in the case of faith, of love toward Christ, God, the Word, the church, self, man, the world. It will be sufficient, however, to treat it briefly under two categories: love of God, and, love of man.

Jesus taught that the first and greatest commandment is wholehearted love of God, and he demonstrated the full meaning of this in his own life. He understood God, appreciated what he was and what he meant, willed to be and do that which was good for God, sacrificed himself for God, dedicated himself completely to God's service. All this was his love. It is also a Christian's love. Every true believer in Christ is devoted to God with his whole heart, and mind, and soul, and strength—to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Certainly, if this is true of believers in general, it must be true of those who are engaged in the work of God. What a difference such an attitude makes in the whole life and service of the church worker! It gives a sense of oneness with God, of working in co-operation with him, of being engaged in eternally valuable enterprises, of spiritual fruitfulness; for love is a transforming power that changes the whole tenor of one's being and activity. The leader who has this attitude will find no task too difficult, too small, or too monotonous; for his devotion will conquer the difficulties, make significant the little services, make adventurous even the humdrum aspects of his task.

Jesus taught that there is a second commandment like unto the great commandment of love toward God: *love of man*; and he demonstrated the full meaning of this also in his earthly life. He understood men, appreciated them, had good will toward them, sacrificed himself for them, and rendered them constant service. He loved people. So, too, do genuine Christians.

The Christian leader, because of the very nature of his position, has a special obligation to show such love. Is he not a leader of people? He must endeavor, therefore, to understand them, to appreciate what they are and what they may become, to take an interest in their welfare, to do all he can to help them, to

serve them in unselfish devotion. Such an attitude on his part will make for patience, cheerfulness, forgiveness, generosity, hopefulness, perseverance, and many other valuable leadership traits.

While Christian leaders must have such love for all men, they must have it particularly for the members of their group. Their effectiveness in their group depends to no little extent upon it. Love is a tremendous power in the class room, in the society meeting, in a visit to shut-ins, in a service of worship—in any contact of leaders with their people. There is no greater force which leaders can wield. It is more powerful than physical force, discipline, argument, instruction, or exhortation.

Love, then—love of God and love of man—is a second attitude which is indispensable in the life and work of Christian leaders.

3. *A Sense of Responsibility.* Jesus had this attitude: "I must work the works of him that sent me"; "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." Such also must be the attitude of Jesus' followers.

Every worker in the church needs a keen sense of responsibility to God, to Christ, to the church, to those committed to his care. Service in the church is a sacred trust, a high obligation, a God-given stewardship. It cannot be lightly laid aside or indifferently done. Therefore the leader needs to develop this sense of responsibility. He must come to see his work as an integral part of Christ's work for humanity; he must give himself wholeheartedly to it; he must use every means at his disposal to accomplish it; he must work while it is day, while there is opportunity to work; he must be intent upon its fulfillment.

A sense of responsibility is, accordingly, a third basic attitude needed by Christian leaders.

4. *Loyalty.* This attitude is closely related to the other three which we have considered. (Indeed, all Christian attitudes are interrelated. Love grows out of faith and, in turn, inspires greater faith. A sense of responsibility grows out of faith and love, and, in turn, contributes to these. Loyalty is a part of faith, and love, and the sense of responsibility.) It is faithfulness to one's faith, faithfulness in one's devotion, faithfulness in the performance of that for which one is responsible. We find it in Jesus. He was ever loyal to his God, to his mission, to his ideals, to his followers. And so are genuine Christians.

A Christian leader, to be truly effective, cannot do without the attitude of loyalty. His success demands loyalty to Christ, to his kingdom, to his church, and to his redeemed people.

These attitudes of faith, love, a sense of responsibility, and loyalty are all essentials of a Christlike personality. They are integral qualities of Christian leaders. They are elements which must be built up and strengthened if leaders are to do their work with a maximum of spiritual effectiveness.

*Assignment 2:* Think of some outstanding Christian leader whose life you know quite thoroughly—preferably some living leader whom you know personally or intimately. What part do faith, love, a sense of responsibility, and loyalty have in his (or her) life? Can you conceive of his (or her) being an outstanding leader without these attitudes?

### Building and Strengthening Christian Attitudes

The building and strengthening of attitudes is a large subject. Here it is possible merely to offer a few practical suggestions.

1. *Make Christian attitudes your personal ideal.* Keep these attitudes before you as one of the goals of your self-improvement. Be intent upon achieving them. Be ready to sacrifice for them.

2. *Seek, create, and use opportunities to express these attitudes in life, and particularly in your work.* Attitudes are strengthened by expression and experience. For instance, faith is made stronger by acting on the basis of one's beliefs; love is intensified by doing loving deeds; a sense of responsibility grows with the acceptance and discharge of responsibilities; loyalty is deepened by the very act of being loyal. Therefore, put your ideal into practice. Live your attitudes.

3. *Select the environment and associations which are most likely to stimulate Christian attitudes.* It is a known fact that people tend to absorb the spirit of their environment and to become like the persons with whom they associate intimately. Choose, therefore, those surroundings and those companions and friends most conducive to the development of a truly Christian character.



4. *Substitute Christian attitudes for unchristian ones.* Sometimes, even in consecrated Christian people, unchristian attitudes develop, such as fear, doubt, worry, despair, jealousy, unfriendliness. These must be eliminated as quickly as possible. This requires will power. But it is not enough to suppress such attitudes; positive Christian attitudes must be developed to take their place. This may be done by deliberately recalling one's Christian ideal; by seeking at once an opportunity to express this ideal; by engaging immediately in some activity which calls forth the right attitude; by communing with God in prayer; and in other ways.

5. *Live wholesomely.* Christian attitudes have their best chance to develop when body and mind are strong and healthy; unchristian attitudes seem to flourish in periods of physical and mental weakness. Let moderation rule in all things.

6. *Keep your life open to the sanctifying power of God.* All human effort to become Christlike is futile unless the heart and mind are open to divine power. Too much emphasis cannot be laid upon the need of spiritual cleansing and spiritual renewal. Reading in the Word, prayer, worship in the services of the church, participation in the Sacrament—these are essential to the building and strengthening of Christian character.

**Assignment 3:** Think of some situation you now face in your personal life or church work which makes it difficult for you to maintain Christian attitudes. What might you do, more successfully to maintain right attitudes in this situation?

### Summary

Attitudes are an important aspect of human personality—important for daily life and for leadership activities. They influence growth, indicate character, influence the lives of others, and determine the effectiveness of personal and leadership efforts. Every church leader needs these Christian attitudes: faith, love, a sense of responsibility, and loyalty. By making these a permanent part of his personality, he will improve his effectiveness in all phases of his task. Much can be done in this direction by faithfully observing the suggestions made in this chapter.

### Questions for Discussion and Review

1. What is an "attitude"?
2. Why are the attitudes of the Christian leader important for the success of his work?
3. Why is Christlikeness the norm of all right attitudes?
4. What is Christian faith? In what should a Christian leader have faith?
5. What is Christian love? Toward what should the church leader express his love?
6. What is meant by "a sense of responsibility"? What is its significance in Christian leadership?
7. What is loyalty? What is its place in the life and work of church workers?
8. How may leaders in the church develop and strengthen Christian attitudes?

### Suggestions for Further Study

#### *Leader's Attitudes and Pupil Interest*

Read Ch. 16 in Weigle's *The Pupil and the Teacher* on the principles of attention. After you have read this chapter, write a short paper on the theme suggested above.

#### *The Relation of Attitudes to Habits*

Read William James' booklet, *Habit*. Make notes on how attitudes affect habits and how habits determine attitudes.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### THE LEADER'S SKILLS

"That wasn't a bad program we had today," said Mr. Fretz, as he and a fellow superintendent drove home from the Sunday school convention. "I suppose Dr. Richards and Professor Franklin were right when they pointed out that we need not only consecrated, but also skilled teachers. At least, they agreed on that point; and both of them emphasized it very strongly. It's a fine ideal."

"No doubt about it," responded his friend, a superintendent in a neighboring Sunday school. "The church must produce good teachers, or take the consequences. I find that people just won't listen to a teacher who doesn't know his stuff. You know, our people are getting pretty good education done up in interesting ways now-a-days; and they're not going to be satisfied with less than the best in our Sunday schools."

"But where can we find skilled teachers?" queried the first speaker. "Take my school. Why, we haven't more than two trained teachers on the whole staff."

"We gave up trying to find them some time ago," answered his companion. "Now we're engaged in *producing* them. Oh, it's a lot of work—don't I know it—and results come slowly; but we're beginning to get results. We can see the difference already, and we've only been at it a few years."

"What do you mean—'producing them'?" came the quick response. "What do you do?"

"Well, each year we select a number of the most promising young people and form a study group. We give them the best instruction we can. We send them to conventions and institutes—by the way, we had eight of them here today—to get information and inspiration. Then we give them a chance to practice. We now have an assistant for practically every officer and teacher in our whole school. They observe how things are done, and, every now and then, they are given a chance to lead or teach. Then we talk over their work and make suggestions for improvement. Some of them drop out—but they probably would never have amounted to much anyway. Those who stick to it—well, they usually make good. Three or four of them are now regular teachers, and they're doing very well. By next fall, we'll have ready five or six more."

"Might try it. Sounds interesting. And, you say it gets results!"

Yes, the church needs leaders who are consecrated; but it needs leaders who are also skilled. Consecration, devotion, personality, character—these will take a leader far on his way to effectiveness; but skill will definitely augment the power that lies in each of these, and will carry him still farther toward fruitful service.

### Leadership Skill

Skill is the power to perform a task effectively with a minimum expenditure of time and energy. Skill in leadership is, therefore, the power to perform the task of a leader with effectiveness and with efficiency. Since the task of leading others is quite complex, it follows that leadership skill is complex also. Indeed, it is the composite of a great many specific abilities, themselves often called "skills."

Every line of work in which Christian leaders engage requires some combination of specific skills, and the combinations vary according to the particular tasks in which the leaders are engaged. Superintendents need one group of skills; teachers, another; choir directors, still another; and so on. The nature of the task in each case determines the special abilities needed. And yet, underlying all the different types of church work, there are some skills which all leaders ought to possess—certain general abilities which would appear to be essential for all.

### General Skills Needed by All Christian Leaders

There are, in the first place, a number of skills which all Christian leaders should have simply because they are human beings—such, for example, as the ability to read, to think, to express themselves, to associate with others. With these we shall not be concerned here; they may be taken for granted.

Then there are, in the second place, certain skills which all should have simply because they are Christians—for instance, the ability to commune with God, to meditate on his Word, to worship, to live peaceably with others, to be helpful; or, in a word, to live a truly Christian life. These, too, shall be assumed as already existing.

There is, in the third place, a group of general skills which Christian leaders need because they are leaders. It is with these that we shall be primarily concerned. There are at least four of

them, each of which is itself a complex of lesser skills: (1) skill in planning and preparing for a specific task; (2) skill in performing a piece of work; (3) skill in evaluating what has been accomplished; and (4) skill in improving one's work. Let us consider each of these in some detail.

1. *Skill in Planning and Preparing for a Specific Task.* Whatever the nature of a leader's task, he most certainly ought to have the ability to plan his work and to prepare thoroughly for it. A teacher, for example, ought to be able to plan a class session and prepare himself for his part in it; a superintendent ought to be able to outline, and then work out, an effective service of worship; a president of an auxiliary society ought to be able to map out a program for a meeting and see to it that the necessary preparations are made; and an organist ought to have the ability to select preludes, offertories, anthems, and postludes that harmonize with the keynote of the day's worship. All such planning and preparation should be thorough and as nearly perfect as possible. This requires skill—in fact, a large number of skills.

It requires ability to select an aim. The Christian leader needs to ask himself: Just what is it that is to be accomplished by this particular piece of work? To answer this question, he will no doubt have to go back still farther and ask: Precisely what are the needs of this group with whom I shall be working? What can I do to help them meet these needs? Then, and only then, can a leader select skillfully a worth-while aim. But then he must go on: Now, having my aim, how can I best accomplish it? What method shall I use? What materials are best adapted to this task for which I am preparing—what Bible passages, what books, what hymns, what experiences? Answering these questions, and then acting upon the answers, requires skill, that is, if the planning and preparing is to be of a kind which will prove effective.

The Christian leader, then, needs skill in discovering the needs of people, in choosing aims to meet these needs, in selecting methods that will produce results, in gathering materials which will be of real value, and in weaving all these together into a unified plan, or program. True, a leader may secure results without all this, but they will be largely accidental; and it is doubtful whether the Lord's work should ever be left to chance. Conse-

crated, skillful preparation is certainly a requirement in effective leadership.

2. *Skill in Performing a Piece of Work.* If preparing for a task is important, certainly carrying it out is at least equally important. This, too, requires a number of skills. For example, it calls for skill in winning the interest of the group; for ability to use in actual work the method, or methods, which have been chosen during the preparation; for ability to make adjustments in his planned program, in view of unexpected situations which may arise; for wise dealing with any problems which may be raised; for skill in getting all the members of the group to participate in the work; and for ability to direct the whole enterprise to a profitable conclusion. Each one of these skills requires, first, knowledge of the best methods to use in any given situation, and, then, ability to use these methods effectively.

It is not within the scope of this text to indicate how each of these skills can be developed—there are other leadership education courses which deal exclusively with matters of this kind. The present purpose is to call to the leader's attention the fact that development in all these skills is extremely important. Unless church workers know how to interest people, how to get them to co-operate, how to guide them, how to meet their problems, and how to carry on a specific task until it is successfully completed—unless church workers know how to do all these things and are able actually to do them, the effectiveness of their work is certain to be distinctly limited.

3. *Skill in Evaluating What Has Been Accomplished.* When a task has been completed, it has been completed. Nevertheless, a wise leader will never say, "Well, that's that," and forget the whole thing. If he is truly wise, he will think through his accomplishment to discover, if possible, what he has really achieved. He will think of the aim which he had in mind when he started out; he will think of the actual results which came out of the piece of work; he will compare the two to see whether he has succeeded in doing what he intended to do. If he finds that he has fallen short at some point, he will ask himself why this happened: Did I aim to do too much? Was I insufficiently prepared? Did I use wrong methods? Were the materials which I used the cause of this failure? Could we have accomplished more had we been in different surroundings? In some such way, the wise

leader will analyze the whole situation with a view to ascertaining exactly what was accomplished and why, if there was any failure, it occurred. All this, of course, requires considerable skill. It requires ability to see results, to see failures and weaknesses, to discover the causes of these.

Such skill church workers should endeavor to acquire. A leader in a missionary society should not be satisfied with the fact that the members repeatedly tell her that the meetings are interesting. She should be eager to discover whether these meetings are actually making the members mission-minded, whether they are leading the members to pray and give and work for missions, and so forth; and she should have the ability to find out. A Sunday school teacher should not be satisfied with the fact that his young people attend fairly regularly and seem to pay attention. He should endeavor to discover whether the Sunday sessions are helping to make these young people more Christian in their faith, in their outlook on life, in their daily living; and he should know how to find out. The same is true in the case of practically any other church worker. All need skill in evaluating what they have accomplished in the lives of the members of their group.

4. *Skill in Improving One's Work.* Evaluation of a piece of work, were it to stop with the evaluation, would be of questionable value. Its chief worth lies in the opportunity which it gives the leader to do better the next time. And this is a tremendous value; for, as has been stated before in this book, every truly consecrated leader is ever eager to improve himself and his work. Accordingly, Christian leaders need skill in self-improvement.

When from his analysis of his work, a leader discovers a flaw of any kind—a flaw in personality, in method, in the use of materials, or any other—he ought to endeavor to overcome it. This requires skill. It requires, too, patience, perseverance, practice. Christian leaders need to have the ability to improve themselves and their work.

**Assignment 1:** Make a list of some specific leadership skills which you feel you have not sufficiently developed. As you read the next section of this chapter, keep these in mind. Perhaps there will be a suggestion or two of real value to you.

## The Development of Leadership Skills

Granted that these various skills are highly desirable, how can they be developed? It has already been pointed out that it is not within the scope of this text to give detailed information on the development of skills. A few practical suggestions, however, will perhaps be of assistance.

1. *Select for development those skills which are of immediate value to you in your work.* The development of any skill usually requires considerable time and effort. Think of how much of these is needed to become proficient in practically any line of everyday work. It stands to reason, then, that improvement in leadership skills will take time and effort. Therefore, it is advisable to select skills for development, which will prove to be of immediate practical value when they are acquired. And, further, it is probably wisest to choose at first some quite simple skill, which can be required with a degree of ease; its rather rapid mastery will be a definite encouragement to tackle a harder skill.

2. *Learn what is involved in the particular skill which you have selected.* For instance, if you have decided to develop skill in conducting a meeting, you will need to know what the duties of a presiding officer are, what the rules of parliamentary procedure are, what attitude a leader should have, and so on. Or, if you have decided to develop skill in conducting discussions in a class or other group, you will want to know how to get a discussion started, how to ask leading questions, how to keep the group from going off at fruitless tangents, how to gather up the main thoughts expressed by the members of the group, how to reach a fair conclusion, and how to make use of this conclusion. Help to this end can be secured from books, from experienced persons, from observation of what others do in similar situations, and from courses of study.

3. *Put into practice what you have learned.* Practice is essential in developing any skill. Mere repetition, however, may not produce the desired result; in fact, it often happens that learners acquire the opposite of genuine skill by repetition; or, stating the matter more accurately, they often acquire skill in doing something incorrectly. For example, a child may practice playing the piano, and yet develop an entirely incorrect technique, which later will make it practically impossible for him to become



an accomplished pianist. Practice is essential, but it should be done under the supervision of someone who can point out mistakes and give guidance. Often, to be sure, it is impossible to find a competent supervisor, and in such cases persons must do the best they can without this help; but, wherever possible, church workers—especially such as are just entering upon, or preparing themselves for, work in the church—should seek the counsel of experienced leaders. There is no reason, for example, why a church school teacher should not invite a trained public school teacher to attend his class sessions with a view to securing from this experienced teacher, suggestions for improvement.

Further, it is always desirable to do one's practicing under circumstances which are as natural and normal as possible. The best experience is gained, not in artificially created situations, but, one might say, on the job. In some sections of the country it used to be common practice to have a Sunday school teacher gain her experience for teaching little children by teaching a group of fellow teachers after they had been instructed to act like children. The whole procedure was childish, ridiculous, useless. The place in which to learn to teach children is in a children's department—nowhere else. And precisely the same is true of learning to do any other task skillfully; it must be done on the job. For this reason it is wise for prospective leaders to act for a time as apprentices, assistants, or associates of skilled and experienced leaders.

4. *Endeavor to discover the weaknesses in each practice experience and make a genuine effort to overcome them.* Most skills are complex, with some elements easier to acquire than others. Concentration on points of difficulty makes for economy of time and effort. It is probably best to practice upon one point at a time, just as a skilled pianist does with phrases of particular difficulty. With each attempt some little progress should be noted—a little more ease in doing the thing, a little more self-confidence, a little better result. It is thus that perfection is ultimately attained. A single effort is seldom sufficient. Development of skill requires patience and perseverance. Real skill is the reward of those who are willing to pay the price of all achievement—hard work.

The church worker who will analyze his ability and see in what skills he is deficient, who will concentrate on a few of these

at a time, who will learn all he can about what each involves, and who will then practice them faithfully until they are mastered—such a church worker will certainly improve himself as a leader; and his work will become increasingly a source of inspiration and of joy.

*Assignment 2:* Select from your list of skills in which you feel there is room for improvement one which you would like to develop. Try to find out all you can about this skill. Make notes on what you think ought to be done to develop it. (Then, in the weeks—or months, or years—to come, practice it, if possible under supervision, at least at first.)

### The Value of Leadership Skill

That leadership skill is of tremendous value to a Christian leader is, no doubt, already fully evident. It will be helpful, however, to point out quite specifically some of the very practical things which it does for him:

1. *It conserves the leader's time and energy.* Everyone knows that a skillful carpenter can do a job in less time and with less effort than one who lacks skill. The same is true of church workers. Much time and effort could be saved in church work, or used to advantage in further extending the influence of the church, if all its leaders were skilled in their tasks.

2. *It adds to the leader's general effectiveness.* There can be no question about the fact that of two persons, alike in all other respects, that one will accomplish most who possesses skill. The skillful carpenter not only builds more quickly and with less effort than his unskillful neighbor, but he also builds better. And this is equally true of church workers. This does not mean that skill alone is necessary; other qualifications are equally important, and some of them are much more important. But it does mean that skill does contribute to effectiveness.

3. *It increases the leader's joy and satisfaction in his work.* Happiness and satisfaction in life depend, to a large extent, on the achievement of noticeable and worth-while results. Since

skill contributes to success, it naturally contributes also to the joy that grows out of success.

There are other values in possessing skill, but these three alone are of sufficient benefit to inspire anyone to undertake seriously its development. Effective work, done with a minimum of effort and with dispatch, and bringing real satisfaction and joy—what more could one ask?

### Summary

All Christian leaders need skill—the ability to do their work efficiently and effectively. Among the many skills which are desirable, four would seem to be of special importance: skill in planning and preparing for a task; skill in performing the task; skill in evaluating it; and skill in improving one's doing of it. These, and other needed skills, can be developed through study, observation, and practice. Once developed, they bring with them success and personal satisfaction.

In striving for greater skill, leaders should have the motive and the spirit of the church leader who wrote:

“Oh, let me teach the truth of life  
In the most effective way,  
And let me live the life I teach  
In the presence of God each day.”

### Questions for Discussion and Review

1. What is meant by “skill”? What is meant by “a skill”? Give a few examples of skills in daily life.
2. Name four general skills which appear to be of special importance for all church workers.
3. What specific abilities are involved in “skill in planning and preparing for a task”?
4. In general, what sort of skills are needed in carrying out a piece of church work?
5. Why should leaders endeavor to evaluate their work? What skills are needed to do this?
6. How can leaders become skillful in improving themselves and their work in the church?

7. What four steps are necessary in the development of any skill? Explain each of them.
8. What can your congregation do to insure the regular production of skilled lay leaders?

### Suggestions for Further Study

#### *Skill in Planning Church Programs*

Read pages 17-22 in the pamphlet *The Qualities of An Effective Leader* (see Bibliography). List the principles of program-making there given and compare your present procedure in planning for your regular tasks in the church with the procedure suggested.

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## CHAPTER IX

### THE LEADER'S PURPOSES

One of the interesting tales which make up that fantastic book, *Alice in Wonderland*, is the story of Alice and the Lock—that strange creature who kept running around frantically, restlessly, and apparently aimlessly.

"What's the matter with you? Are you crazy? What are you looking for?" asked Alice at last.

"I'm looking for a key to unlock myself, and I can't find any," replied the Lock pathetically.

How many people there are like this lock! They have, it would seem, everything they need but a key—something to unlock their possibilities and to release their powers. Where can they find such a key? The answer is: In a high and noble goal and in a determined purpose to reach that goal. Christian leaders, too, need such a goal and such a purpose.

In discussing the leader's task in Chapter III, the ultimate aim of all Christian work was stated somewhat in these words: *to help extend the grace and rule of Christ among men*. The extension of Christ's grace and rule is the great end-goal of all Christian endeavor. Accordingly, what every church worker needs is an all-controlling purpose to contribute everything he possibly can to the attainment of this goal. Such a purpose will be the key to his whole life and work. It will be the central element which will give meaning to everything he is and does. It will be the power that will unlock his possibilities and latent powers. Without such an all-controlling purpose the Christian leader's most strenuous activities will be little more than so much running to and fro. With it, even his smallest tasks will take on genuine significance. Needed, then, by every Christian worker—this high and holy purpose!

### Contributory Goals and Purposes

The extension of Christ's rule among men is a very simple goal, and yet it is very complex. Upon analysis it will be seen that numberless factors are involved in it—for example, to mention but a very few: developing in oneself a Christlike spirit,

bringing others to a knowledge of God, winning them to faith in Christ, leading them to become members of the church, helping the church to expand, bringing the teachings of Jesus to bear upon all human relationships. These, and a great many others, play a part in the process of achieving the ultimate goal. Each of these may be viewed as a partial, or, to use a more commonly accepted term, contributory goal.

Accordingly, the Christian leader will have not only a great, dominating, all-inclusive purpose to help in the establishment of Christ's grace and rule among men, but also many smaller purposes, all of which, if they are truly what they should be, will be in harmony with his major purpose, and will, if carried out, contribute to it. To be more concrete: Here is a president of a young people's society in a congregation. He decides to improve the equipment and furnishings of the room in which his society meets. This is a very definite purpose. Why does he want the room beautified and better equipped? He may have many reasons. Whether these are Christian or not will depend entirely on whether his purpose ultimately is to contribute to the extension of Christ's rule among men. If he wants the room improved in order that young people will be more readily attracted, in order that the society may grow, in order that its spiritual influence may be greater, in order that its members may become more truly Christian—then his purpose is genuinely Christian, because it has been chosen with a view to contributing something to the extension of Christ's rule. And so it is with any other purpose which any leader may have. In every case the acid test is: Does this purpose lead in some measure to the attainment of the great, ultimate goal of all Christian work?

### Christian Purposes for Christian Leaders

What, now, should be a Christian leader's purposes—for his own personal life, for his fellowmen, for the world, for the church? It is impossible, within the limits of this book, to indicate more than the outstanding Christian purposes in each of these four areas; but perhaps enough can be given to make clear the kinds of purpose which church workers should have.

1. *Purposes in Reference to the Leader's Own Life.* What should a leader want to do in order to extend Christ's rule

within his own personal life and to make his own work for Christ more effective? One church worker set down the following:

I shall try, with the help of God—

- (1) To increase my knowledge of God and of his love, and to respond to his grace with all my power.
- (2) To understand Jesus Christ, my Saviour and Friend, better; to make him more completely the Lord of my life; and to be loyal to him always.
- (3) To live, as nearly as I can, a Christlike life.
- (4) To increase my knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of the Bible, and my skill in using it.
- (5) To understand my church better; to participate more actively in its life and work; and to accept that which it offers me for my life.
- (6) To understand people better, and to develop a Christlike attitude toward them, regardless of their color, condition, or creed.
- (7) To increase my understanding of the best methods and materials available for my work, and to develop greater skill in their use.
- (8) To plan a definite program of self-improvement, and to do what I can to follow it.

It is quite evident that this statement is not exhaustive; but it is surely equally evident that it is a statement that shows consecration, careful thought, a right spirit, and high and holy purposes.

*Assignment 1:* Read again this list of purposes. Which of them are you willing to make your own? Are there any which you would add to it? Make a list of such purposes for your own use.

*2. Purposes in Reference to Other Persons.* A Christian leader is concerned not only with his own personal development, but also with the development of others. He should have, therefore,

some very definite purposes in reference to them—for example, in reference to the members of the group of which he is the leader. What kind of purposes should these be? The following list suggests typical goals which any church leader might well make his own purposes:

- (1) To help people to know, appreciate, and respond to the love of God.
- (2) To help people to grow in Christian faith, and to guide them in this growth.
- (3) To help people to express their Christian faith in personal and social Christian living.
- (4) To help people to know, understand, and appreciate the Bible, and to make effective use of it.
- (5) To help people to know, understand, appreciate, and love the church, and to participate intelligently and joyously in its life and work.

An examination of these five objectives will show clearly that each of them contributes something of vital importance to the extension of Christ's rule among men. They are, therefore, truly Christian goals. They are, too, quite inclusive; there is probably no specific Christian aim which could not find a place under some one of them. And, further, they are sufficiently general to be adaptable to any group at any time.

*Assignment 2:* Study these five objectives very carefully. Compare them with your own purposes—with what you are trying to do for the members of your church group, or for people in general. Compare them with the officially adopted aims of your church or church organization. Has anything of vital importance been omitted in these five statements? If so, add it to them. Then consider the total list. Are you ready to make these your purposes?

3. *Purposes in Reference to the World.* One of the fundamental tasks of all Christians, and particularly of all Christian leaders, is, as has already been pointed out in an earlier chapter,



to further the kingdom of God among men. In other words, a leader in the church has purposes not only for himself and for the people with whom he comes in contact, but also for the whole world. To be sure, the purposes which he has for himself and for other individuals contribute, if carried out, to the advancement of the kingdom of God on earth. But there are other purposes which go beyond these—which take in all the social relationships of mankind. The following are typical of this class:

- (1) To help in bringing all men to an acceptance of Jesus' idea of the kingdom of God as the one great ideal toward which all, individually and collectively, should strive.
- (2) To help in bringing all men to the point where they will strive to realize this ideal of the kingdom in all the relationships of life.
- (3) To this end, to help all men see the defects and evils of the present social order, and the underlying causes of these evils; and to help them eliminate these causes and thus improve all the relationships of men.
- (4) To help towards the realization of a world in which:  
(a) human life will be interpreted in harmony with God's purpose for man—the development of Christlike personality as the supreme and eternal value;  
(b) the real value of human personality will be "correctly appraised, duly appreciated, and consistently sought"; (c) justice will be extended to all—a full opportunity for self-realization by all men; (d) true religion will unify and harmonize the lives of individuals into a practical brotherhood based on a common experience of the one God and Father of all men; (e) practical brotherhood will be expressed in loving and unselfish service in a spirit of Christlike stewardship.<sup>(1)</sup>

These goals overlap and merge with the leader's purposes in reference to people. Only as individuals are transformed into believing and Christlike persons will the kingdom of God be

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<sup>(1)</sup> Based upon W. H. Greever, *Facts and Forces in the Social Order*, 1933, pp. 10, 11.

established among men. On the other hand, however, the establishment of a Christian society is of tremendous help in transforming individuals within that society. Individual transformation and social transformation are mutually helpful. "There is no conflict between the individual and the social aim. . . . The achievement of either aim will carry forward the realization of the other."<sup>(2)</sup>

**Assignment 3:** Re-read these four objectives. Do you think they are in harmony with the major purpose of all Christian leaders—namely, the extension of Christ's rule among men? If so, what can you do in your community to realize these purposes?

**4. Purposes in Reference to the Church.** The Christian Church is the primary agency in and through which the Christian leader seeks to realize his purposes for himself, for other people, and for the world. The extent to which he can realize these is certainly dependent partly upon the effectiveness of the church as a whole—upon its fidelity to its mission, its adoption of appropriate methods, its perseverance in its task, its willingness to work and sacrifice for the achievement of its goals. Every leader should, therefore, be eager to make the church as perfect as it is humanly possible to make it. In other words, he should have definite purposes in reference to the church itself. The following may serve as a guide to leaders who desire to assist in the perfecting of the church:

I shall, God helping me, co-operate with other Christians:

- (1) To make the church as spiritually effective as possible.
- (2) To make the ultimate goal of the Christian Church the goal of our congregation, of all its auxiliary organizations, of all its leaders and members.
- (3) To extend Christ's rule among men: (a) by personally bearing witness to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour; (b) by supporting and participating in the evangelistic, educational, and merciful, work of our congregation; (c) by supporting the evangelistic, educational,

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<sup>(2)</sup> H. C. Munro, *Christian Education in Your Church*, 1933, pp. 41, 42.

and merciful work of the church at large both at home and abroad; (d) by winning others to do all these things.

- (4) To improve the organization, spirit, program, and work of the church.

Each of these may, of course, be broken up into still more specific purposes; and, for practical use, this is desirable. Each leader may well make for himself a personal list of very definite things which he will endeavor to do for the good of his own congregation and of the general church body of which he, through his congregation, is a member. Such a list need not be made in a day; it may well be an ever expanding list, with new purposes added to it as new opportunities present themselves or as the leader finds more time and larger means to offer to his church.

*Assignment 4:* Endeavor to make a quite comprehensive list of purposes which you now have in reference to the church. (Such a list may well serve as a guide for your daily prayers, as a guide when you are planning to make contributions to the church, and as a guide to your own personal activities in the church.) From time to time add new purposes to this list; and, if old ones have been achieved, eliminate them. This will keep your list up-to-date.

Taken as a whole, the purposes set forth in this chapter are quite an imposing group. To some they may seem to be too imposing—too large and comprehensive, too idealistic, too difficult of attainment. They are not easy, and they are ideal. But it is just this that marks them as worthy for Christian leaders; for Christian leaders are engaged in making the greatest ideal that mankind has ever envisioned a reality in human life. Some years ago the engineer who drew up the plan for the development of the public park system of Washington, D. C., said:

“Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men’s blood, and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans: aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical

diagram, once recorded, will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing intensity."

If great purposes have a place in the purely human endeavors of men, surely they have an even greater place in those endeavors in which men are trying to co-operate with the eternal God in the fulfillment of his divine will for mankind. Those who would be "co-workers with God" must have purposes as great and challenging as those which he has revealed. When our Lord, shortly before his ascension, gave his final commission to that little group who had gathered about him during his few years of earthly ministry, he gave them no small and circumscribed goal; he said: "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations"—a tremendous task. A mere handful they were, and the world was large and sinful; but they accepted that challenging goal and made it their life purpose. And they accomplished marvels even within their own generation—"the Lord working with them."

### The Development of Worthy Purposes

Worthy purposes are not usually acquired in a day; they must often be discovered by diligent search and through long experience. There are certain suggestions, however, which are of value in the development of high goals:

1. *Dedicate yourself to the highest ideals you now have.* Every leader in the church has some goals which he wants to reach. If he would develop higher ones, he must begin by giving himself, first of all, to those ideals which he now possesses. Willing and whole-hearted devotion to the best one knows is the first step on the way to the attainment of that which is better. St. Paul once wrote: "Whereunto we have attained, by that same let us walk" (*Phil. 3: 16*). It is a good rule. Great ideals are best realized by doing well immediate tasks. Great purposes are best developed when present purposes are carried out conscientiously and to the best of one's ability.

2. *Keep your present purposes open for revision and improvement.* It is not always possible to tell in advance whether a given purpose is the best possible. Only experience—one's own and

that of others—can definitely demonstrate the quality and value of a purpose. Accordingly, a leader's aims must be subjected to the test of experience. If this reveals its value, well and good; if, however, it shows that the purpose is not the best, then it must be changed, revised, improved. New situations, new needs, new insights—these often make a revision of one's purposes desirable. So, there should always be an open mind and a willingness to alter one's goals for the purpose of realizing the highest possible outcomes.

3. *Seek, actively, new and ever higher goals.* While the Christian leader will devote himself whole-heartedly to his present objectives, and while he will ever be alert to make improvements in them, he will do more than these; he will actively seek to discover new and higher goals through study. Church workers should be acquainted with the ideals of other leaders, with those of the church, with those of Jesus Christ himself. Through study of such ideals, they can learn much—learn, for example, what ideals have been tried in the past and have been found wanting; what ideals have been tested and found sufficient; what ideals are now accepted by others and are proving their merit; and, above all, what ideals Jesus revealed for men to follow. It is through such study that new insights will come. And when they do come, they, in turn, must be cheerfully adopted and whole-heartedly followed.

4. *Keep your whole life attune to the Spirit of God.* Self-dedication to ideals, whole-hearted adoption of life purposes, careful testing of them in life, diligent study to seek ever higher purposes, and willingness to accept higher ideals when they are discovered—these are good. But they are not enough for the attainment of purposes which are genuinely Christian. Something more is needed: power from God himself. It is only through the presence of the Holy Spirit that Christian self-dedication can take place, that Christian ideals can be whole-heartedly adopted, that a real spiritual test of purposes can be made, that insight into ever higher purposes can be secured, and that these can be truly made one's own. Therefore it is essential that Christian leaders keep their lives attune to him without whose presence and power Christian life and Christian leadership are impossibilities.

### Summary

A purpose is a goal deliberately chosen as the object toward which a person intends to direct his efforts. Every Christian leader needs a great, central purpose, which will give meaning and value to his life, and increase the power and effectiveness of his work. Such a unifying and empowering purpose may be found in the desire and determination to help in the extension of Christ's rule among men. There is no higher purpose than this. For practical use, the Christian leader will find it helpful to analyze this ultimate purpose into its constituent elements—into contributory purposes. These contributory purposes may be grouped around four objects: self, others, the world, the church. To develop the highest possible purposes in reference to each of these, the leader must live up to his present ideals, seek ever higher ones, accept them when he finds them, and do all this in the consciousness that it is only by God's help that it is possible. Thus the leader will attain to purposes which will give meaning to his life and effectiveness to his work.

### Questions for Discussion and Review

1. Why do some very active church workers seem to accomplish nothing of very vital significance? What do they lack?
2. What is a "purpose"? What are some things which a controlling purpose will do for Christian leaders?
3. What should be the great, ultimate purpose of every church worker?
4. What is meant by "contributory purposes"? What determines whether or not a specific purpose is Christian?
5. Are the goals set forth under "Purposes in Reference to the Leader's Own Life" Christian? Give reasons for your answer. Similarly, discuss the goals listed under "Purposes in Reference to Others," "Purposes in Reference to the World," and "Purposes in Reference to the Church."
6. How can Christian leaders develop high and noble life purposes?
7. Can church workers of their own native powers develop purposes which are truly Christian and ultimately adequate? Give your reasons for your answer.

### Suggestions for Further Study

#### *How Ideals Help to Unify Personality*

Read Ch. 17 in W. W. Charter's *The Teaching of Ideals*.

#### *The Leader's Aims for His Church*

Read Ch. 2 or 3 in H. C. Munro's *Christian Education in Your Church*.

#### *Tasks Which Make for Creative Living*

Select and read one of the many fine chapters in Kirby Page's *Living Creatively*.

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## CHAPTER X

# LEADERSHIP IMPROVEMENT THROUGH STUDY

We have considered the importance of the Christian leader's place in life, the obligations which rest upon him as a follower of Jesus and as a member of the church, the nature of the task in which he is engaged, and some of the major qualifications which he needs if he is to do his work effectively. We are now ready to think more definitely about the various ways in which leaders may acquire the qualities, knowledge, insights, attitudes, skills, and purposes which have been treated in Chapters V-IX; or, in other words, to try to ascertain what means and methods Christian leaders may utilize to improve themselves and their leadership in the church.

In general it may be said that the way to improvement is the way of personal growth, the way of inner development; for improvement must not be viewed as a mechanical thing, but rather as a vital, living process—an integral part of the whole life of the leader, not something that is externally and artificially appended to it. In considering the following chapters, therefore, it is very important that this be constantly kept in mind: leadership improvement is a living process, an inner growth, a development of self.

Further, it should be borne in mind that throughout this process the leader is dependent not upon his own powers merely, but upon the power which God supplies. It is conceivable that without God an artificial improvement might be possible; but without his inspiration, guidance, and help no real inner growth can take place—it is impossible. This very fact, when rightly conceived, becomes a source of genuine strength to the person who is engaged in improving his leadership; for it makes him conscious of the additional fact that, throughout his efforts, God himself is working with him to perfect that which he has begun in him. Here is inspiration to do one's best; here is encouragement to persevere; here is assurance of ultimate success.



With this understanding, then—that leadership improvement is a process of inner growth and development in which God co-operates vitally with the person who, in utter consecration, devotes his efforts to making himself the best possible instrument which he can be for God's service, and in which the person, in turn, co-operates with God—we may proceed to ask ourselves: What ways are there by which Christian leaders may improve their leadership in the church?

Fundamentally, there are four such ways: (1) through study; (2) through worship; (3) through fellowship; and (4) through service. Each of these is valuable; each has a definite contribution to make to leadership growth. In this chapter we shall take up the first of them and try to discover, in a very practical way, how it may be used for self-development.

### Study as a Means of Self-Improvement

Study is the systematic and purposeful application of one's mental powers. Everyone knows that people can and do develop themselves through systematically using their mental powers for some definite purpose.

What will study do for the Christian leader? To be concise, it will help him to develop those basic qualifications which we have been considering in the last few chapters: knowledge and insight, attitudes, skills, and high purposes. To each of these, study has a very definite contribution to make. In each case it can help to lay the foundation upon which these may be developed; and, further, it can help to guide the development itself while it is in progress. Study, therefore, should be one means which every church worker should employ for the improvement of his life and Christian service.

What opportunities for study are open to Christian leaders? A little thinking will reveal that there are a great many different possibilities. These fall naturally into two major groups: opportunities for informal study, and, opportunities for formal study. Consider a few in each class:

1. *Opportunities for Informal Study.* Quite frequently, these are overlooked by leaders, perhaps because such opportunities have never been brought definitely to their attention; and yet they are among the most readily available. Many leaders can

find little time for taking advantage of more formal opportunities and frequently are not so situated as to be able to attend schools and classes; but these same leaders can, if they are willing, find time to engage in study of this informal character which we are here considering.

For example, they can engage in *independent reading*. Books and magazines are now available to practically anyone. There is no reason why leaders even in remote sections cannot now find good literature which will help them in their personal growth.

Then there is the possibility of *personal conferences* with other leaders. In almost every community there are at least a few persons who have had advanced educational opportunities and far-reaching experiences. Conversations with such persons can be very illuminating and highly rewarding. Church workers would do well to cultivate the friendship of such leaders, and to learn, from contacts with them, many things of real value for their own life and work.

Another avenue for informal study is that of *personal observation*. Much practical knowledge can be gained by being alert to what is going on about us. For instance, what an insight into human nature one can get by observing the people he meets. Occasionally, too, there are opportunities to watch others as they engage in leadership tasks, perhaps quite similar to one's own. From such opportunities much can be gleaned that will be of genuine worth.

Further, the opportunities afforded by *lectures, addresses, conventions, institutes, forums*, and other such community and church projects, should not be overlooked. The average community has at least a few such opportunities in the course of a year, and wise leaders will take advantage of them.

And, to mention but one more, there is *correspondence*. Much information and help can be secured through correspondence with church officials and other authorities. Such persons are usually willing and eager to give help when it is requested. Leaders, when writing to officials for counsel, should be very specific in their requests and should endeavor to give sufficient information about themselves or about the situation which prompted the request, to make it possible for the official to give an intelligent answer.

There are, then, many different ways in which church workers can improve themselves by informal study. Among these are reading, personal conferences, observation, various kinds of public meetings, and correspondence.

*Assignment 1:* Make a list of opportunities for informal learning which are available to you. How many of these did you take advantage of during the past year?

**2. Opportunities for Formal Study.** Formal study activities usually require more time, more regularity, and more intensive application than do the informal types of learning; but for this very reason they are usually more fruitful. Church workers who can afford the time and who are advantageously situated should certainly make the most of such opportunities as are open to them. Among formal study possibilities are the following:

In the first place, there are the *study activities in the regular educational program of the congregation*. Sunday schools, young people's and adult societies, adult catechetical classes, and other such groups offer their members an educational program which is of pronounced value. Even the stated services of the congregation are educational in many of their elements. No one will question, for example, that a carefully prepared sermon is an opportunity for learning as well as for inspiration. In these regular study activities of his own congregation, then, every church worker may find a means of self-improvement.

In addition to these general study provisions, an increasing number of congregations are offering their leaders an opportunity for self-development through *workers' conferences*, held, usually, once a month. These conferences are being rapidly introduced to take the place of the old-style teachers' meetings, which have to a considerable extent failed to accomplish their purpose. In the more recently developed workers' conference a definite part of each meeting is devoted to study of local conditions, needs, programs, and improvements, with a view to building up a more efficient and effective church leadership and church life. To these meetings are invited not only officers and teachers of the Sunday school, as was usually the case in the past, but also all officers and leaders of other church organiza-

tions, including members of the church council, workers in auxiliary societies, parish workers and visitors, and even representatives of semi-congregational agencies such as the Scouts. In this way it has been possible to co-ordinate the whole work of the congregation into a harmoniously working unit, and also to provide an opportunity for all leaders to study together the specific problems which confront the group. The achievements of such workers' conferences have abundantly demonstrated their worth.

In addition to these general conferences for all workers, some churches have found value in special departmental, divisional, and other group conferences—for example, of all children's workers in the congregation, or of all workers within a given organization. Such more limited group meetings undoubtedly have a supplementary worth.

Further, not a few congregations have set up special *leadership training classes*, conducted primarily for the benefit of their present and prospective leaders. Some congregations, indeed, have made this feature a part of their regular, all-year-round program. In such training classes, approved courses are offered and often credits are given toward a denominational or interdenominational diploma. Churches which have held such classes have found them one of the most fruitful means of providing an adequately trained corps of leaders for their many and varied activities.

Some congregations have found it impossible or impracticable to conduct their own leadership training classes. Many of these have, therefore, united with other near-by churches, either of their own or of some other denomination, to establish *community leadership classes or schools*. These are usually quite like the congregational classes already described. When compared with the congregational class, these community classes or schools have certain disadvantages and also certain advantages. Among the disadvantages are these: inability to treat so thoroughly matters which are of great significance to a single congregation, and, when the school is interdenominational, inability to treat as positively as might be, the particular faith and life of a single denomination. But against these disadvantages must be considered these distinct advantages: the probability that a group of churches acting co-operatively can secure a better staff of in-

structors and offer a larger variety of courses, and the splendid opportunity which such inter-church schools give for becoming acquainted with leaders of other congregations and sharing experiences with them. The community leadership training school has been a powerful instrument for good in the past, and will probably continue to be so.

Another opportunity for more or less formal study is found in the many *summer schools, institutes, and camps*, held annually under the auspices of various denominations. Quite frequently special courses are offered for leaders, and sometimes credit is given for such courses. One important value of these summer activities is that they bring together a large number of church workers from a fairly extensive geographical area. This affords, in addition to the formal instruction, opportunities for an exchange of leadership experiences.

And, finally, mention should be made of *courses offered by educational institutions*—colleges, universities, and seminaries—in their regular curriculum, in night and extension schools, and in summer sessions. Not a few such courses have distinct value for leaders in religious work—for example, courses in psychology, sociology, educational theory and practice, and administration and supervision. For some of these courses credits may be earned toward the official leadership diploma of the denomination.

There are, then, at least six different ways in which church workers may improve themselves by formal study: by participation in the regular program of the congregation, by attendance at workers' conferences, by enrollment in a congregational class for leaders, by enrollment in a community leadership school, by attendance at a summer school or camp, and by taking courses under the auspices of an educational institution. Not all of these are likely to be available to any one individual, but in most places at least one or two of them will probably be within the range of possibility.

**Assignment 2:** List the opportunities for formal study which are available to you. Which of these did you take advantage of during the past year?

### Materials for Study

There is a wealth of material available for study; indeed, there is such an abundance of it that leaders will need to choose carefully in order not to dissipate their efforts.

For example, there are a great many *textbooks*, specifically prepared to be of service to church workers. These textbooks cover practically the whole field of church work. There are books on the Bible, Christianity, the church, worship, evangelism, education, missions, service, human nature, church administration and supervision, teaching materials and methods, and numerous other subjects. Some of these texts are prepared for persons with rather limited educational background and experience; others, for persons who have had somewhat better advantages; still others, for leaders with advanced training. (A list of approved textbooks may be secured from the educational board of the general church body to which your congregation belongs.)

Then, there is a great variety of *general books* which deal with subjects of value to Christian leaders. Such books may be found in public libraries and, often, in the private libraries of pastors, superintendents, public school teachers, and others. Catalogues of publication houses usually contain well-chosen lists arranged under specific topics. (Every leader should have on hand a copy of the most recent catalogue of his church's publication house.)

Every Christian leader should have in his own possession, too, certain generally useful *reference books*—for example, a Bible concordance, a Bible dictionary, a Bible commentary, and a few choice volumes along the line of his particular field of church work.

Further, *periodicals* furnish considerable material for study. Certainly every church worker should be a subscriber to the official paper of his church. Regular reading of this paper will help him keep abreast of the life of his church, and will furnish him with much material which he can use in his work. Each general church body usually publishes also—either directly, or indirectly through its auxiliary societies—magazines of special interest to various groups: an educational magazine, a journal on missions, a periodical on men's work in the church or on women's work, a magazine for leaders of young people's socie-

ties, and so forth. Much practical help can be derived from such sources of information.

A word should be said also about *pamphlets* and *leaflet literature*, which are appearing in increasing abundance. Such literature, usually made available by boards and agencies of the church, is of no little value. It is generally concise in form, direct and to the point, and quite inexpensive; indeed, much of it is distributed without charge.

A quite different type of study material is to be found in *the leader's own experience*. This is a source which, if properly utilized, offers as great possibilities as books—in some respects even greater possibilities. There is almost no end to what an alert leader can learn from his own experiences. Anyone who has ability to penetrate beneath the surface of life, who has a bit of power to do some thinking of his own, and who has good common sense, can find limitless opportunities for self-development by studying the multitude of experiences which come to him daily. How much one can learn of human nature, of effective ways of dealing with people, of the real values of Christian faith, of the importance of the church in human life, and of hundreds of other things, simply by keeping one's eyes and ears and heart open to daily life as it flows by! The school of experience is still a great school, and it furnishes materials in rich and varied measure.

These, then, are some of the materials which are readily available for the Christian leader's study. As has been said, wisdom is needed in making a selection, particularly in making a selection of books. Church workers will find that their pastors and other church officials, especially those in the employ of church boards and church auxiliaries, are most willing to be of assistance when requested to help.

**Assignment 3:** What books bearing on your church work have you read during the past year? Select a few good books for special study during the coming year.

### Effective Study

The foregoing sections have shown that there are numerous opportunities and abundant materials for study. Something more is needed, however, than opportunity and material—namely, an

adequate study procedure. Much time can be wasted and much good energy squandered by study procedures which are not efficient. The following suggestions are offered with a view to helping leaders make their study as efficient and as effective as possible:

1. *Cultivate worthy study motives.* The reason for one's undertaking to engage in study has much to do with the joy which he will get from it; and this, in turn, affects the student's whole spirit and his ultimate achievement. It is highly important, therefore, that Christian leaders go to their study with motives which are inspiring, such, for example, as self-improvement with a view to serving God and man.

2. *Cultivate proper study attitudes.* There are many attitudes which are conducive to effective study, just as there are many others which tend to interfere with it. Among the more essential right attitudes are eagerness, open-mindedness, respect for truth, diligence, patience, perseverance, self-confidence, and, above all, sincere dependence upon God. The last suggests the value of earnest prayer for divine guidance and blessing.

3. *Adopt and follow a study plan.* It is surprising how much can be accomplished even in a limited amount of time, when one has a definite plan. Great things have been achieved by men who have utilized spare moments while waiting for meals or while riding to and from work. Most of these men had some sort of plan, and to it they adhered conscientiously. It is desirable to have definite times for study and to keep these daily or weekly periods as free as humanly possible from interruptions.

4. *Make provision for a wholesome study environment.* Different persons do their best work under different conditions. Each leader must, therefore, discover for himself where he can do the best studying. In general, however, the following factors should receive consideration: good light, freedom from noise, fresh air, moderate temperature, sufficient room for books and other materials, absence of anything and everything which may distract.

5. *Concentrate on the task in hand.* There are a few people who can do several things at a time, and do them all well. They are the exceptions. Most men need to focus their attention upon one thing in order to do it as it should be done. This is particularly true of study. It is a good general rule to avoid scattering



mental energies over a large number of study tasks. Every task will, of course, have several interesting sidelines, which may be studied with profit and with a bit of diversion. For example, a teacher who is studying *Matthew* will find it interesting and helpful to study not only the gospel itself, but also something of the geography of Palestine, something of the life of the people in the first century, something of the present-day teaching values of this book, and so on. Or, a young people's leader who is studying leadership methods may find it valuable to consider also young people's psychology, organization, program, and materials. The point is that everything should contribute to one concentrated study and not be scattered over unrelated fields.

6. *Select, organize, and keep a record of findings.* In all worthwhile study many points of permanent value are unearthed. These should be carefully noted and then organized so as to be readily available. The keeping of a permanent record, in notebooks or on cards, is highly desirable. The fruits of hard study should be preserved in writing, for even the best memory will not hold everything of value.

7. *Review your work from time to time.* It has just been said that even the best memory will not retain everything. It is good practice, therefore, to keep it fresh. A hasty re-reading of a book or notebook is of no little value; sometimes a mere glance at a page will serve to revive things of worth which would otherwise be forgotten. Such review is especially helpful at the end of a given piece of work, before going on with the next step in the program.

8. *Express and make use of what you learn.* It has been said, "Nothing is ever truly learned until it is expressed." This may be an exaggeration, but it certainly drives home the truth that expression helps learning. Wise leaders find it advantageous to tell others what they have learned, to discuss their findings, and to use them at the earliest natural opportunity.

### A Suggested Study Program

It was indicated in the preceding section that a plan of study is helpful. What kind of items may properly find a place in a Christian leader's study program? The following is suggested as a fairly comprehensive and balanced program for one year:

## IMPROVING OUR LEADERSHIP

- (1) I will read: the Bible, daily; our official church paper and our official magazine for leaders in the church organization to which I belong, regularly; and at least two books related to my work, annually.
- (2) I will actively participate in the study program which my congregation provides for my age-group (Sunday school, auxiliary, society, etc.).
- (3) I will attend all meetings for leaders in my congregation, which I am expected to attend (workers' conferences, special meetings).
- (4) I will enroll in a leadership training class. (This may be in the congregation, the community, a summer school, or camp. If none of these opportunities is available, a leadership course taken by correspondence may be substituted.)
- (5) I will seek personal conferences with leaders—pastor, superintendent, public school teachers, etc.—to talk over my study and work with a view to improving them.
- (6) I will endeavor to find at least one opportunity to visit some church group similar to my own, to observe the leader and his group in action.
- (7) I will try to attend at least one church conference or convention—if possible, one especially arranged for congregational leaders.
- (8) I will endeavor to keep myself informed on the best recent publications of value to me.
- (9) I will endeavor to learn from my personal experiences, particularly from my experiences in my own church group.
- (10) I will prepare myself regularly and thoroughly for every session with my group.

Some of the items here listed might be omitted; others might be substituted for them; still others might be added. Each leader

will have to make his own plans, for no hard and fast program can be set down as final.

*Assignment 4:* Sketch a year's study program of your own. Compare it with the one here presented. Revise your own, should you desire to do so. Determine to follow your own program.

### Summary

There are four major activities by means of which self-improvement may be furthered: study, worship, fellowship, and service. Every church worker should most certainly engage in study. There are many opportunities for him to do so. There are also numerous study materials which can be utilized by him: books, periodicals, and daily experiences, for example. To make the most of his opportunities, the leader should have a definite study plan and should follow it. Such regular and systematic study throughout the years will be of inestimable benefit to the leader himself and will contribute definitely to the effectiveness of his work for Christ, his church, and the world.

### Questions for Discussion and Review

1. What do we mean by "study"? What is its value for Christian leaders?
2. What opportunities for study are available to church workers today? What such opportunities are available in your own community?
3. What are some of the kinds of study material which are of particular value to church workers? How many of these are available to members of your congregation? How could more of them be made available by your congregation?
4. How may study be made truly effective—what are some fundamental principles?
5. Discuss what items should have a place in a year's study program for a superintendent of the Sunday school; for a church school teacher; for a young people's society officer; for a church councilman; or for any other leader in whom you may be especially interested.

## Suggestions for Further Study

### *How We Grow as Persons*

Read one of the following:

1. "How Christian Personality Develops"—Ch. 4 in H. C. Munro, *Christian Education in Your Church*.
2. "Development in the Religious Life"—Ch. 12 in H. J. Sheridan, *Growth in Religion*.
3. *What the Bible Says about Bible Study*

Read the following passages and note what is suggested about the value of studying the Bible: Rom. 15: 4; II Tim. 3: 15-17; Ps. 119: 105; Jn. 5: 39; Heb. 4: 12; Prov. 2: 1-9.

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## CHAPTER XI

# LEADERSHIP IMPROVEMENT THROUGH WORSHIP

There are four fundamental means by which self-improvement may take place. One of these, study, was discussed in the preceding chapter. We turn now to a consideration of a second of them: worship.

### Worship as a Means of Personal Growth

Worship may be defined very simply as communion, or fellowship, with God. In Christian worship this communion is mediated through the God-man, Jesus Christ. It is through him, and only through him, that relationship between God and man is established and the divine-human communion, which we call worship, is made possible.

In Christian worship there are, obviously, two basic factors: God, and, man. Each of these is an active agent; each has a very definite part in the fellowship. God, who is always present wherever there is genuine worship of him, welcomes and receives man's devotion, helps him to worship in true spirit, makes himself known to the worshiper, and bestows upon him spiritual gifts—grace, forgiveness, peace, power, and joy. *Man*, on his part, contemplates God and his spiritual gifts, adores him for his grace and goodness, accepts with thanksgiving what he offers, acknowledges and repents his own unworthiness, dedicates himself ever anew to God, and endeavors to adjust his life to the revealed will of the Eternal. Thus there is in worship a mutual sharing, a selfless giving of each to the other.

It is self-evident that such worship must have an up-building effect upon the life of the true worshiper. Just what does it do? To put it as succinctly as possible, it links the worshiper with the divine Source of all spiritual life and power. That worship is, therefore, a tremendous force for personal development in Christian leaders goes without saying. It is probably no exaggeration to say that true Christian worship is the most potent factor in all self-improvement, for it really changes self-development into God-development of one's self.

To be more specific, worship—like study, but with diviner power—helps the Christian leader to develop all his leadership qualities. For example, it has an effect upon the leader's general physical and mental powers, giving them a sort of spiritual tonic; it undoubtedly contributes to insight, giving it a spiritual penetration which mere human wisdom does not possess; it contributes to the full flowering of Christlike attitudes, giving them spiritual food upon which they may mature; it helps in the development of skill, giving it spiritual control and confidence; and it aids in the focusing of life on high and holy purposes, giving life a divine meaning and an eternal sanction. So worship makes its own contribution to qualifying Christian leaders for the effective performance of their God-given tasks. It is, therefore, a means which every church worker should utilize for the improvement of his own life and Christian service.

If Christian leaders are thus to improve themselves, they must have opportunities for worship. And such opportunities there are in great abundance. These fall naturally into two categories: opportunities for individual, or private, worship; and, opportunities for group, or public, worship. Let us think of the outstanding examples of each:

1. *Individual, or Private, Worship.* This type of worship is the most intimate relationship which a person can have. In it he meets alone with God. In it the Spirit of God and his own spirit come into personal contact. In it he shares with God all that God is and all that he is, all that God has and all that he has. What opportunities does the Christian leader have for such intimate, personal fellowship with God?

First of all, there is the opportunity of *Bible reading*. Bible reading is not necessarily worship, but it may be. And it should be. For Bible reading at its best is something more than the mere reading of a book; it is the soul's direct contact with God himself through God's Word—the soul seeking to know God, listening to God, hearing God speaking to it, finding God sharing himself, receiving God's promises and assurances, accepting God's gifts. It is largely through his Word, recorded in the Bible, that God fulfills his part of worship; for his living Spirit is in his Word, empowering it and making it vital. Thus Bible reading is the very foundation of true worship, the approach and appeal of God to man. Whenever a person takes up his Bible to

read it in order that he may hear God, he is by that very act engaging in worship. Anyone may take up his Bible at any time and in any place; the opportunity for worship through Bible reading is a universal, ever-present opportunity.

Closely related with that of Bible reading, is the opportunity of *meditation*, the focusing of the mind upon God and the things of God. It may grow out of Bible reading, or out of some passage or truth of the Bible recalled from memory, or out of the contemplation of some work of God in nature or in life. In such meditation a person finds himself in spiritual touch with God; there is real communion. It is self-evident that this way of worshiping, too, is not limited to any special time or place. Anyone may engage in it at any time, anywhere.

A variation and extension of this kind of personal devotion is found in what is often called "*the practice of the presence of God*." It is meditation—plus. It is living in the consciousness of God's ever-present presence. Mystics of all periods of Christian history have made much of such worship; a medieval monk, Brother Lawrence, wrote a most illuminating book on it: *The Practice of the Presence of God*. This type of communion with God goes back to Jesus himself, who lived every moment of his life in the consciousness of his Father's presence. It was this kind of fellowship which St. Paul had in mind when he wrote, "Pray without ceasing." It was this, too, which was in Luther's thought when he suggested that the Christian could worship God through his work by recognizing its God-given dignity and honoring God in its performance. And it is this concept which underlies such a hymn as:

"Work shall be prayer, if all be wrought  
As Thou wouldst have it done;  
And prayer, by Thee inspired and taught,  
Itself with work be one."

This high conception of worship really transforms the whole of life into an act of constant communion with God, and that is undoubtedly what every Christian's life, particularly every Christian leader's life, should be.

A help to both meditation and the practice of the presence of God is found in *devotional reading*—that is, the reading of literature of a distinctly religious content, such as books of daily

devotions, hymns and other religious poetry, the services of the church, sermons and written meditations, Christian history and biography. When such materials awaken the consciousness of God and reveal some of the great spiritual realities of life, genuine worship takes place.

And then, to mention but one other opportunity for private worship, there is *prayer*, the conscious conversation of the soul with God. It may be silent or vocal, but it is always the soul's speaking itself out toward God. Sometimes it takes the form of adoration and praise; again it is the expression of gratitude and appreciation; or it may be the outpouring of confession, of petition, of self-dedication; frequently it embodies elements of each of these. Whatever its particular content, it is intimate, personal fellowship with the eternal God. Such prayer can find a place in every church worker's life at any time; there is no limit to this opportunity. It may be used day or night, at work or at play, in solitude or in the midst of a multitude. Nevertheless, it is undoubtedly helpful to have special times and places of prayer, where the leader may consciously withdraw himself from all else to be alone with his Maker, to speak with his Father who heareth in secret. In such prayer-worship the Christian may find it helpful to use prepared prayers, but there should certainly be room also for the less formal and more spontaneous utterances of his own soul. And in such utterances, the Christian leader will do well to keep in mind the lines of Phillips Brooks:

"O do not pray for easy lives,  
Pray to be stronger men;  
Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers,  
Pray for powers equal to your tasks.  
Then the doing of your work shall be no miracle,  
But you shall be a miracle.  
Every day you shall wonder at yourself,  
At the richness of God that has come to you  
By the grace of God."

Such are some of the opportunities for individual, or private, worship which every church worker may utilize for the growth of his own personality, for the development of his own powers, for the improvement of his own spiritual effectiveness: Bible reading, meditation, the practice of the presence of God, devotional reading, and prayer.



**Assignment 1:** Think of your own personal life of worship. Which of these opportunities do you use regularly? Do you neglect any of them? Would your life be fuller, richer, more potent if you would take greater advantage of all of them?

2. *Group, or Public, Worship.* Group worship, too, has a distinctive place in the life of the Christian leader. It has benefits for him which he cannot get from individual worship—benefits which come because of his fellowship with other Christians. Moreover, such worship has long been recognized as one of the best means of giving public expression to one's Christian faith, as an evidence of that faith, and as a definite obligation of Christians. Paul exhorted the early Christians, "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is."

There are many forms of group worship, and the details of their practice vary widely. The important thing for the leader is that he understand and use those forms which are available to him and which have within them the greatest possibilities for his own spiritual growth. We shall consider here only the more common types:

There are, in the first place, many opportunities for group worship *in the congregation*. These are found in the public services of the congregation as a whole and in the worship periods of its various auxiliary units—schools, societies, and other groups. First in importance are the church services, and particularly those in which the Lord's Supper is administered. All the advantages of private communion with God are here, and, in addition to them, the inspiration and strength which come from intimate spiritual association with fellow believers. No one who has experienced the uplifting and renovating influence which comes through public worship in the services of a congregation will question the supreme value of such experiences for personal growth. Of large power, too, are the opportunities furnished by group worship in various meetings and sessions of the congregation's societies and schools; for they also help to develop the consciousness of God's presence, to lift up the worshiper's spirit into the realm of the eternal Spirit, and to mold his personality and life by contact with God and with God's children. All such group worship in the congregation, therefore, is a means

which may be, and should be, utilized by church workers for the spiritual development of their lives.

In the second place, there are opportunities for group worship *in the home*. The importance of the Christian home has already been pointed out in this text. It is the key-factor in much of life. Its power, even in a day like ours when its influence seems to be declining, is a primary power in the fashioning of the future. How important, then, the religious life of the home, especially its worship! Family worship, so much neglected in the rush and secularization of modern life, is something which needs again to be cultivated with consecration and determination by those who profess faith in Jesus Christ. And in this, Christian leaders must take the lead. Family worship has distinct values for the leader himself: it not only unites him in close fellowship with those whose lives are most dear to him, and helps to lift him above the commonplace aspects of home life; but it also brings the power of God to bear on his whole self, makes him a better Christian, and thus strengthens him for the effective discharge of his leadership tasks.

In the third place, there are opportunities for group worship, outside the congregation and the home, *in other public gatherings*—for example, in church conventions, group conferences, leadership schools and classes, camps, and elsewhere. Worship at such gatherings has a contribution to make to those who attend, which cannot be made by any address, discussion, exhibit, or other feature of the meeting. Yet, how often the worship hour is slighted! When church leaders come together to consider the all-important business of building the church and extending the kingdom of God, or to improve themselves as leaders, nothing can be of more spiritual worth to them than a common profession of their common faith, a common confession of their own individual and corporate sins and shortcomings, a common prayer to God for help and guidance, and a common re-dedication of themselves to God and the work which he has given them to do. Therefore, when attending such gatherings, leaders should participate whole-heartedly in its worship activities.

These are some of the opportunities which leaders have for group, or public, worship: congregational services, worship in church societies, family devotions, and group worship in general Christian gatherings. Each of these, if entered into with true

Christian spirit, will make its definite contribution to the leader's personal development and, therefore, to the development of his spiritual effectiveness.

**Assignment 2:** Think of your own participation in public worship. Do you make regular, whole-souled use of the opportunities afforded by your own congregation? Are you a regular communicant at the Lord's table? Do you participate actively in the worship of the church organizations to which you belong? What is your attitude toward worship in other than congregational meetings? Do you have regular family devotions in your home?

### Materials for Use in Worship

An important factor in making worship worth while and meaningful is the appropriateness and the quality of the materials which are used. Fortunately there is an abundance of such materials from which the church worker may make his own selection. Lists of devotional books are found in the catalogues of church publication houses. It may be well, however, to consider some of the worship equipment which every church worker should have:

Above all else, a *Bible* is indispensable. In his Bible the leader should, as he studies it, mark such passages as are of particular value to him for devotional reading—passages containing great truths, inspiring promises, spiritual assurances. Such passages are found in all parts of the Bible, but particularly in the Psalms, in the writings of the prophets, in the teachings of Jesus, and in the epistles.

The church worker should certainly have his own copy of *the service book and hymnal of his own church*. What a wealth of rich material there is here! Here he will find some of the best devotional literature—services, prayers, hymns, canticles, etc.—of the ages.

A good *family worship book* is highly desirable. This is not a necessity; for there are other ways of securing helps for family devotions. Many church papers carry one or more pages of devo-

tional reading matter in each issue. Sunday school lesson quarterlies often contain daily worship suggestions. Some synodical bodies publish and distribute at nominal cost little pamphlets and booklets of such material. There are reasonably priced calendars with a brief meditation for each day of the year. At least one church body publishes a monthly devoted entirely to worship. And so there are many helps for worship in the home. Some such help every church worker should have, and use, in his family group, or in his private devotions, or in both.

Finally it should be said that not a few Christian leaders have found great spiritual blessing in preparing *their own devotional literature*, by selecting their own Bible passages, writing short meditations on them, finding little poems and hymns to go with their meditations, and formulating their own prayers in harmony with the thought which they have been following.

**Assignment 3:** Make a list of the devotional helps which you now possess. Which of these do you actually use? Are the helps which you have adequate to your needs? If not, provide yourself with adequate worship materials. Consult your pastor on what would best serve your purpose.

### Making Worship Spiritually Effective

A church worker may realize the importance of worship, have numberless opportunities, possess adequate materials, and nevertheless not derive the full spiritual benefit from his worship experiences. There is such a thing as empty worship—worship without spiritual effectiveness. What can the Christian leader do to help make this highest of all human experiences what it ought to be? A few very practical suggestions are offered:

1. *Pray God to attune your spirit with his Spirit.* Without this inner harmony, there is no possibility of spiritually effective worship. Nor is it possible for a person to make his own spirit right with God; it is God alone who can do it. Therefore the need of prayer for his help.

2. *Cultivate the attitudes essential for genuine worship.* This step naturally grows out of the first. The person who has been brought into oneness of spirit with God by God's grace, will on

his part do all within his power to develop and strengthen those attitudes which God inspires within him: faith, reverence, humility, sorrow for sin, love, devotion, receptivity, obedience, loyalty, and all the rest. Only as each of these is sincerely sought can worship reach its greatest heights of spirituality.

3. *Participate actively in the worship.* Having prayed for God's help, and having approached the act of worship with a right spirit, the next step is active participation in the act of worship itself, whether this be private or public. It is perfectly true that there are times when one is not in "the mood to worship," but it is equally true that one of the best ways to get into that mood is by actual participation. One cannot wait always on moods; one can make moods. This requires, often, concentration and will power; they are good things to develop in all lines of human endeavor, and also in the matter of worship. Critics of public worship have been vociferous in recent years in their attack upon church services. "How can several hundred people feel like worshipping at exactly the same time and in exactly the same forms?" they shout. They have overlooked the fact that there is such a thing as a will to worship; and it is precisely this which makes possible a public service in which hundreds of believers participate meaningfully and effectively at one and the same time. So, participation, whether at first one feels like it or not, is essential.

4. *Concentrate upon each step in the worship.* If participation is to be spiritually effective, the whole being must be focused definitely upon what is taking place. Perhaps everyone has had the experience of having his thoughts wander from the worship to other things or to nothing at all. This is no cause for particular alarm; it is no sign, as some have thought, that one is losing touch with God. But it is not conducive to spiritual effectiveness. Every effort should be made to keep the mind on the act in which one is engaging. There should be keen spiritual attention when the Word of God is read; there should be genuine repentance when a prayer of forgiveness is uttered; there should be sincere expression of faith when a creed is repeated; there should be eager longing when the Lord's table is approached; and so on. Reality in worship requires concentration. And only reality can bring spiritual effectiveness.

5. *Relate your worship to your life.* Worship, to be spiritually potent, must be related to the whole of one's life—a vital part of it, not something apart from it. Purity of life goes far toward making worship what God would have it be—"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," said Jesus—and worship, in turn, goes far to produce purity of life. The spirit of brotherliness contributes to worship; and worship, to it. And so it is with all other virtues. Effective worship requires and inspires effective living.

Where Christian leaders follow these five suggestions, there is little need of practical suggestions on such relatively secondary things as time, place, posture, and form, though all these are of no little significance. There is value in having times of worship where this sacred communion of spirit with Spirit can be uninterrupted; of having forms which are beautiful, inspiring, and enriching; and of assuming postures which bring the body into inner harmony with the attitude of the soul. One further matter, however, is of such decided value that it must be included: the having of a well balanced program of worship, for it is entirely possible to engage in spiritually effective worship and yet be one-sided or limited in one's spiritual reach. Christian leaders, above all others, should certainly strive for a full-orbed fellowship with their Lord.

### A Worship Program for Leaders

The following is offered merely by way of suggestion. There are undoubtedly other possibilities of equal, or even of greater, merit. This one will serve to indicate something of the kind of program every church worker should make out for himself.

I will engage in these *individual* worship activities:

- (1) In at least a few minutes of devotional Bible reading daily.
- (2) In a period of silent meditation upon God and the things of God, daily.
- (3) In periods of prayer, daily—morning and night, and at such other times as may suggest themselves.
- (4) In reading devotional literature.

- (5) In the practice of the presence of God throughout my daily life.

I will engage in these *group* worship activities:

- (1) In the public services of our congregation, regularly.
- (2) In the service of the Holy Communion, regularly.
- (3) In the family devotions of my own home, daily.
- (4) In the worship services of Christian groups both in and out of the congregation, whenever I am in attendance at such group meetings.

In both of these—individual and group—worship activities, I will endeavor to include in my worship:

- (1) Adoration, praise, thanksgiving.
- (2) Repentance for sin.
- (3) Confession of faith.
- (4) Sincere expression of self-dedication.
- (5) Petitions for fellow Christians, for all humanity, for myself, for the coming of the kingdom of God, and for all agencies which are endeavoring to carry out the will of God on earth: the home, the church, the state, and others.

A program of this kind, not to be slavishly followed but to be joyously adopted, will do much to make the leader's worship an instrument for personal growth.

It must not be concluded, from all that has been said in this chapter, that worship is to be viewed merely as a means to an end, the end being personal improvement. Fundamentally and finally, worship is an end in itself; there is no objective beyond it. When a soul is in fellowship with God, an ultimate has been reached. It is precisely this that makes worship the supreme experience of life. Nevertheless, it is equally true that worship does contribute to the enrichment of life, and it is this fact that we have chosen to pick out and emphasize because of its particular value for our present purpose.

### Summary

Worship, though itself an ultimate goal, is also a means of developing personality and enriching life. Every Christian leader should, for his own sake and for the sake of his work, participate in worship, both private and public. Many opportunities are open to him, and the materials which he may use are rich and abundant. But opportunities and materials are not sufficient for spiritually effective worship; a right spirit, a right participation, and a right adjustment of life to worship are essential. In addition to these, a balanced worship program will prove helpful. Such a program each church worker should work out for himself. Then, having learned to worship, and experiencing worship's highest values, the leader will find his own life constantly enriched and his own work constantly improved.

### Questions for Discussion and Review

1. What is worship? What is God's part in it? What, man's part?
2. What are some of the practical values of worship for Christian leaders?
3. What are the two general types of worship, and the chief forms of each?
4. What kinds of worship materials are available? Which of these should every church worker have for his own use? Why?
5. How can the Christian leader help to make his worship spiritually effective?
6. What activities are essential to a well-balanced worship program?
7. Which of the two means of self-improvement thus far discussed do you consider of more importance to Christian leaders—study or worship? Give reasons for your answer.

### Suggestions for Further Study

#### *The Services of Worship Now Used in Your Church*

Read reverently the orders of service in the hymnal of your congregation. Do you understand the meaning of all the parts, especially those in which you participate as a worshiper? If not, secure an explanation of them from your pastor.



*The Need for Better Worship in the Church*

Read Chs. 18, 19, 23 in G. W. Fiske, *The Recovery of Worship*, and think of your obligation as a leader to help improve the worship services of your church.

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## CHAPTER XII

# LEADERSHIP IMPROVEMENT THROUGH FELLOWSHIP AND SERVICE

Of the four fundamental ways of developing oneself for leadership in the church, two have been considered: study and worship. Two, therefore, remain: fellowship and service.

### Fellowship as a Means of Leadership Development

Man is by nature a social creature. Excepting under very abnormal circumstances, he literally craves companionship. There is a reason for this: man needs his fellow man to complete his life. It is this fact that gives fellowship a definite place among the means which Christian leaders may use to improve themselves both as persons and as leaders; for fellowship, as was pointed out in the preceding chapter, is a mutual sharing and, in the case of worthy persons, a mutual enriching.

Everyone who has experienced a deep and lasting friendship is aware of its ennobling powers. Everyone who has engaged in worth-while conversation with persons of outstanding quality, education, and experience, knows how much of value can be derived from such informal discussions. Everyone who has traveled extensively and, in his travels, has had contacts with a wide variety of people, knows how broadening such contacts are. In other words, human fellowship, if it is of the right sort, is broadening, enlightening, uplifting, and may even be challenging and inspiring. It is, like study and like worship, a legitimate means which people may utilize to grow, to improve themselves for their work.

Since fellowship has such large values, every Christian leader ought to cultivate every opportunity available for it. Fortunately these opportunities are numerous, and fortunately, too, they are within the reach of practically every church worker. What are some of them?

1. *Fellowship in Study Groups.* Opportunities for participating in Christian study groups were pointed out in Chapter X: church school classes, meetings of church societies, workers' conferences, leadership training groups, summer schools and camps,

and so forth. Each of these, naturally, furnishes also opportunities for fine Christian fellowship. Before and after the meetings of such groups, contacts may be made with others, conversations may be held, friendships may be formed. But within the sessions themselves there is much opportunity for mutual sharing and enrichment, provided the sessions are conducted, as they should be, as group enterprises. Here are opportunities for free discussion of common problems, for exchange of experiences and views, for co-operative working out of projects, for the interplay of various personalities, and so forth, all of which are conducive to personal growth and to improvement in knowledge, insight, skill, purpose, and character.

2. *Fellowship in Worship Groups.* Every period of group worship is a period of Christian fellowship. In such worship, believers are not only in communion with God, but also in spiritual contact with each other. There is a soul oneness in Christian group worship which is found nowhere else; for, whether they are conscious of it or not, the worshipers do give to each other and receive from each other many things that are richly worth while: encouragement, strength, a spirit of brotherliness, and joy, to mention but a few. This sense of oneness with others, which comes in worship, is a distinct asset for Christian leaders, for it helps them to realize that they are a part of a mighty host who have a common faith and a common spirit. There is inspiration in that, and it makes for better church work.

3. *Fellowship in Service Groups.* Both inside and outside congregations there are groups of various kinds engaged in enterprises of Christian service. Such groups not only render service to those to whom they are specifically ministering, but they also render indirect service to each other. The very fact that they are working together is a distinct help to each of them; for in their working together they are teaching each other, building each other up, and helping to perfect each other in character, ability, and effectiveness. Thus, here too, fellowship makes its contribution to leadership growth.

4. *Fellowship in Social and Recreational Groups.* The programs of most congregations and of most church organizations include certain activities which are primarily social or recreational in character. These are commonly referred to as "fellowship activities." They have an important place in the life of the

church and of its members and leaders. They not only provide diversion and enjoyment, but make for mutual understanding and appreciation. What a vast amount of good, church workers can derive from hours spent in this form of fellowship! Here they can learn much about human nature; here they can discover interests, needs, and abilities in the members of their groups which they probably could not otherwise find out; here they can learn to know their fellow workers better; here they can build up personal attachments which are perhaps impossible in the class room or in the society meeting; and here, in a score of other ways, they can enrich their experience. All such enrichment will have something of value in it for the better conduct of their work in the church.

5. *Fellowship in Personal Friendship.* Genuine, wholesome personal friendship is one of the most fruitful sources of power and help open to any leader. It exacts much, but it also gives much. In it people share their highest ideals and purposes, their joys and sorrows, their temptations and difficulties, their successes and failures; and, as they share, some of their deepest needs are met. Such friendship is a sacred and noble form of fellowship. It develops gradually and must be deliberately cultivated and protected by all parties to it. Once established and maintained, however, it brings with it rewards beyond measure. Such friendships every church worker should have—a few of them, at least—both for the enrichment of his own life and for that which he may be able to contribute to the enrichment of other lives.

Here, then, are five fellowship possibilities open to every church worker, and any one of them will amply reward those who take advantage of the opportunities it offers. If, however, such opportunities are to yield their utmost benefits to those who seize them, certain requirements are highly important; for spiritually fruitful fellowship has its requisites just as has spiritually fruitful worship or spiritually fruitful study.

### Fellowship Requisites

The following suggestions are offered as guides to leaders who would make their fellowship with others as fruitful as possible both for themselves and for those with whom they associate themselves:

1. *Maintain worthy motives in all fellowship activities.* The motives which lead men into fellowships and which prompt them after they have entered are truly legion—everything conceivable, from the meanest selfishness to the sublimest selflessness. The motive underlying any relationship with another person is of primary concern, for it is practically impossible to derive a high product out of a low purpose. Too much attention cannot be given to securing, at the very outset of fellowship activities, a motive that is genuinely Christian: service to God, helpfulness to others, self-improvement for the purpose of making more spiritually effective one's own life and work.

2. *Select for participation those fellowship activities which will prove genuinely worth while.* One may have high motives and yet engage in things which are of little real value, and this is true of fellowships. Not all, not even all perfectly legitimate and wholesome, associations are worth the time and effort which they call for. There is need of making careful selection, especially when one is a busy person, as most good church workers are.

3. *Give to whatever fellowship you engage in, the very best that it is in your power to give.* This means active, full, vigorous participation, whether one is engaged in group study, or worship, or service, or recreation, or some other kind of fellowship. It means, too, contributing one's best for the good of all. A vast amount of time and energy, which might otherwise be used to advantage, is wasted, even in Christian groups, on trivialities, because some persons do not contribute the best of which they are capable. When one enters a fellowship, he has a right to expect that it will be worth while and that all will co-operate to make it so. But then, certainly, the others too have a right to expect that this individual will do his full part. It is precisely this that makes human associations worth while: the giving by each the best he has to give.

4. *Maintain genuinely Christian attitudes at all times.* Human relationships, no matter how sincere and how high, are necessarily subject to occasional strain and friction. Since no two persons are exactly alike, it follows that there will at times be differences of one sort or another. Such differences may lead to difficulties and clashes which can mar the whole value of the fellowship; but they need not do so. If those who participate will

maintain genuinely Christian attitudes—confidence, love, respect, good will, patience, poise, and the like—toward each other, solutions can be found; and the whole group will then be the richer, not the poorer, for the experience through which it has gone.

5. *Spend some time in thinking through your fellowship experiences.* A period of quiet meditation after the conclusion of a fellowship experience is very valuable. Was this worth while? What could I have done to make it more so? What could all together have done to improve its value? Such questions, frankly faced and honestly answered, will do much to make one's fellowship activities the best possible. And always this personal evaluation of an activity should be made in the light of ultimate Christian goals and purposes.

6. *Seek to keep a balanced program of fellowship.* A particular type of fellowship may be the best possible, and yet, if entered into to the exclusion of all other types, may become a narrowing and limiting, rather than a broadening and enriching, thing. Variety is desirable—and balance in the variety. There are persons who are so utterly given to a single friendship that they lose the benefits which they might well secure from other friendships. There are leaders who are so exclusively given to one group within their church that they fail to receive the good things which other groups can give them, and fail, too, to make their contribution to these others. Of course, no one can participate in every group that offers him fellowship opportunities; but one can, by maintaining a balanced program, participate in various groups to the decided advantage of all concerned. Again, wisdom is needed.

The several kinds of possible fellowship groups already mentioned in this chapter—study, worship, service, recreation, and personal—suggest that something of each type be included in the church worker's program. This will help to give the necessary balance.

**Assignment 1:** Make a list of the more important fellowship activities in which you now engage. Study your list carefully. Do you have a fairly balanced fellowship program? If not, consider what changes you should make in it in order to secure this desired balance.

## Service as a Means of Leadership Development

Service, in its Christian interpretation, includes any activity which helps to realize God's purposes. Thus, preaching the Gospel, or teaching God's will, or caring for the needy, or conducting a business with a view to making human living what God would have it be, is a form of service. And even such activities as study, worship, and fellowship, when focused upon the fulfillment of God's purposes, are service.

That service is a vital part of Christianity needs no elaborate proof. The fact that Jesus made it a keynote of his life, the fact that he passed it on to his followers as a keynote for their lives, and the fact that the church has engaged in it throughout its long history are proof conclusive. Nor is it necessary here to consider the many values of Christian service as such; these, though of primary significance, are outside the scope of this text. Our present purpose is to view service simply as a means by which Christian leaders may improve their own work. Were leaders to engage in service merely for the purpose of personal improvement, then it is doubtful whether their work could properly be called Christian service at all. This is not what is intended by this discussion of "Service as a Means of Leadership Development." What is intended is this: Christian service, when rendered to serve God and man, has a by-product of very great value; and this by-product is self-improvement, which in turn enables the leader to render a yet more effective service. At no point, then, is self-improvement an end in itself; it is always a means to an end, and that end is the greater service of God. With this understanding of the meaning of this discussion, what are some of the benefits which come to the leader from the service which he renders?

1. *Better Knowledge and Understanding.* Anyone who truly serves his fellowmen in Christian spirit and for Christian purposes necessarily learns much from his experiences. He learns to see needs, to understand people, to discover good methods of helping them, to find his own abilities, to use these effectively, to understand the power of God, and scores of other valuable lessons. All these increase his mental equipment for his Christian work.

2. *More Christlike Attitudes.* Service rendered in Christlike spirit always tends to augment that spirit. Love grows with loving deeds. Sympathy expands with the showing of sympathy. The spirit of brotherliness develops with brotherly helpfulness. And so with other Christian attitudes. This is true even when there are disappointments, apparent failures, and evident hostilities; for the real Christian spirit feeds on these and converts them into challenges for greater effort. Who ever heard of a real Christian becoming less Christian through the difficulties which he encountered in his task? The rendering of service, then, helps to build in the one who serves a more truly Christian personality.

3. *Improved Skills.* It is a commonplace that skill comes with careful practice and experience. Service activities provide leaders with opportunities for such practical experience. They make it possible to put knowledge and understanding to work, and to compare theory with practice. They help to show which methods are most productive of satisfactory results, and help the leader to become proficient in their use. They help the worker to become skillful by using his skills.

4. *Strengthened Purposes.* Purposes which are never translated into action soon become weak and tend to be forgotten. Through service, purposes are kept in the realm of the concrete; they take definite form; they become vital and life-related. Thus they are given ever new strength—the strength of experience.

There are other benefits which the leader derives as by-products of the work which he does for others, but these will suffice to emphasize the fact that self-improvement can, and does, come through the very act of unselfish service. If church workers are to receive these benefits, they must, of course, have opportunities to serve. Such opportunities are as universal as are those for study, worship, and fellowship, which have been previously considered. There are opportunities in one's own home, in one's congregation, in the local community, in the church at large—practically everywhere. There are opportunities for personally rendered service, opportunities to co-operate with others in specific projects, opportunities to support work being carried on at distant points and thus to serve indirectly—all sorts of opportunities. It will not be necessary to specify them here. It is enough to point out that every such service opportunity is also an opportunity for self-development.



**Assignment 2:** Make a list of eight or ten opportunities for Christian service which are open to you. Include in your list such activities as now receive your personal attention. Is your list fairly diversified—that is, does it contain different types of service activities?

### **Making Service Effective for Self-Improvement**

Though self-improvement is merely a by-product of service and dare never be the leader's ultimate objective, the leader has a perfect right to see that the by-product is forthcoming. The best way to guarantee this is, no doubt, to make the service activity itself the very best that is possible. Accordingly, it will be helpful to consider briefly what leaders can do to make their work as effective as they can for others and, thus, for themselves. The six suggestions, offered in connection with the discussion of "Fellowship Requisites," are equally applicable in the field of service. They are repeated here without elaboration:

1. *Maintain worthy motives in all service activities.*
2. *Select for participation those service activities which will prove genuinely worth while.*
3. *Give to whatever service you engage in, the very best that it is in your power to give.*
4. *Maintain genuinely Christian attitudes at all times.*
5. *Spend some time in thinking through your service experiences.*
6. *Seek to keep a balanced program of service.*

**Assignment 3:** Think about each of these suggestions. Apply each one specifically to your own church work. Ask yourself: How do I rate on each of these? Do I do these things satisfactorily, unsatisfactorily, or not at all? Is there room for improvement? If so, where?

### **Summary**

Both fellowship activities and service activities have a contribution to make to leadership development. Each of them, if rightly used, will help to build character, to enrich life, to deepen

knowledge and understanding, to develop skill, to mold high purposes, and, consequently, to make for more effective work. Opportunities for fellowship and for service are to be found almost everywhere. No leader, therefore, needs to go through life without the benefits which participation in these activities gives. To make the most of his opportunities, both for others and for himself, he should have high motives, choose his activities wisely, give his best to them, be thoroughly Christian at all times, think through his experiences and learn from them, and adopt and maintain a personal program that has balance.

### Conclusion

A changing world calls for an adequate leadership—for a leadership possessed of those qualities of personality and of that equipment for life which can meet the needs of the day. Such leadership is needed in every area of life. It is needed particularly in the Christian Church. A great and challenging responsibility rests, therefore, upon the present leaders of the church and upon those who are preparing themselves to be leaders in the near or distant future.

The church's leaders—that is, all those who labor in or through the church—have a responsibility not only to the world, but also, and even more so, to the church itself and to the Lord of the church, Jesus Christ. They have obligations as disciples of Jesus, obligations as members of his church, obligations as workers in his church.

The greatest of these obligations is to participate actively and as effectively as possible in the task which the Lord of the church has given it to do. This task is the extension of the grace and rule of Christ among men: the winning of souls to faith in him, the transformation of lives, the building of the church, and the furthering of the kingdom of God. To the accomplishment of this ultimate objective every church worker—indeed, every church member—must consecrate his life; and to this end also he must endeavor to improve himself, with the help of God, in order that he may contribute his utmost to the fulfillment of God's purpose for the world.

The leader's self-improvement will, naturally, be along many different lines. He will need to develop his general physical and

mental capacities, to broaden his knowledge and deepen his insight, to make more Christlike his attitudes, to develop the many skills called for in his work, and to seek and find ever higher purposes until he shall have reached the highest.

In order to develop himself to the highest possible point of effectiveness, the leader will want to take advantage of every opportunity for self-improvement which life offers. Four major opportunities are found in study, worship, fellowship, and service. Each of these is a means which any leader may use, and which all should use, for the building of a life which is adequate for leadership in our day. Only as leaders thus endeavor to fit themselves for their work, can they hope to fulfill their obligations to their Lord, their church, and their fellowmen.

And, while Christian men and women are at work to improve themselves for the service of God, they are yet conscious of the fact that it is not they, but God himself who fits them for their places in the work of his kingdom. And so, in all their efforts they look to him without whom they can do nothing, but with whom they can do all things.

Christ, the Lord, is calling for workers in his vineyard—constantly, insistently calling. Christ is ready to empower them for their service, and to work with them as they work his work. But Christ, when he calls, equips, and co-operates, expects nothing less than the best each can give.

“Who answers Christ’s insistent call  
Must give himself, his life, his all.”

### Questions for Discussion and Review

1. What value for self-development is there in fellowship with other persons?
2. What fellowship opportunities are available to Christian leaders? Discuss each of these, particularly as to its leadership-building possibilities.
3. What are some of the major requirements if fellowship is to have real, constructive worth for leaders?
4. In what ways can the rendering of service help the one who serves to improve himself?

5. What opportunities for service does the local congregation offer? The church at large? The home? The community?

6. How can service activities be made most fruitful for those who are serving, as well as for those who are being served?

7. Outline a balanced program of fellowship; of service.

8. Why should every church worker's personal program of self-improvement contain elements of study, worship, fellowship, and service?

9. Of what value has the study of this course been to you? What are some very specific things which it has done for you?

10. When will a Christian leader no longer need to try to improve his leadership qualities and abilities?

### Suggestions for Further Study

#### *The Meaning and Responsibilities of Friendship*

1. Read Chs. 4 and 10 in Bertha Conde, *The Business of Being a Friend*.
2. Read Chs. 1 and 2 in Hugh Black, *Friendship*.

#### *The Church as a Fellowship*

Read pp. 210, 211 in Kirby Page, *Living Creatively*.

#### *How to Discover the Will of God for One's Life*

Read pp. xiii-xxxvi in George Stewart, *Dedication: An Anthology of the Will of God*.

#### *The Supreme Motive for Christian Service*

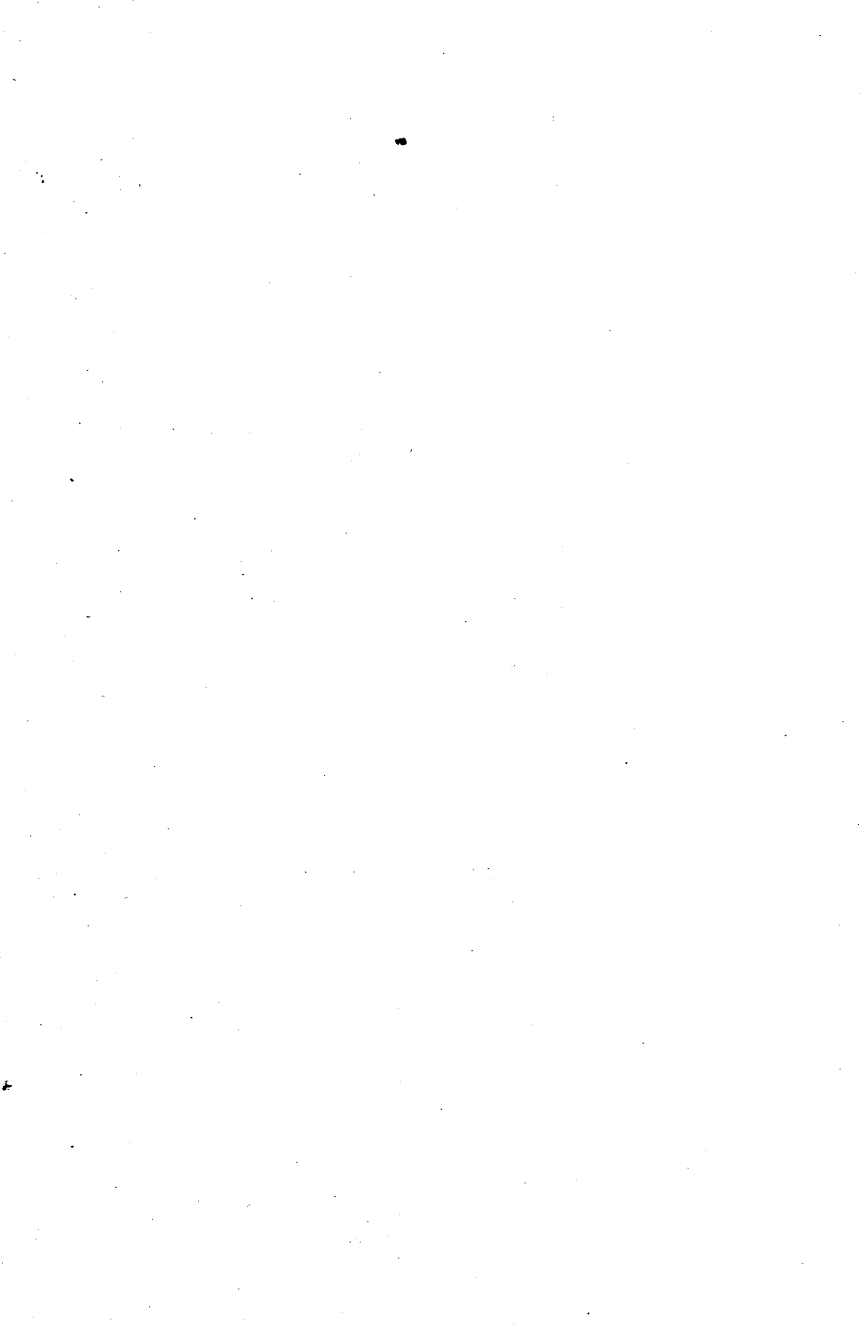
Read Ch. 7 in A. J. Traver, *Life Service*.

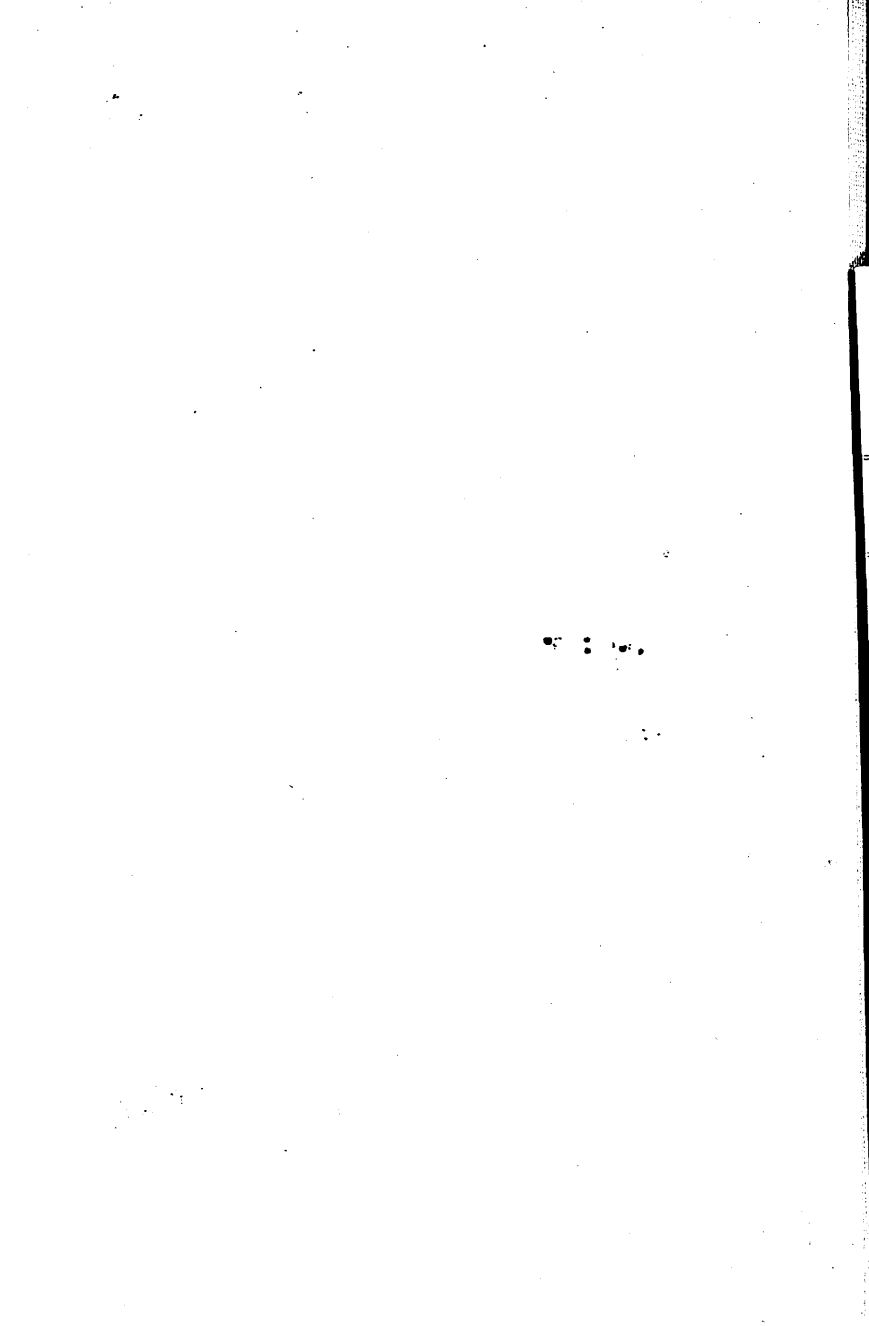
#### *Principles of Effective Christian Service*

Read Ch. 1 in H. F. Cope, *The Principles of Christian Service*.

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